Shenandoah

THE WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY REVIEW

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EDITORIAL

Among the cliches bantered about the intellectual circles of today there is perhaps no grislier platitude than the one perpetrated by W. H. Auden when he entitled a book of verse *The Age of Anxiety*. We grow increasingly weary of being told that our age is a troubled one, that our generation is lost, frantic, or silent, and that the West is declining, vastly and inexorably. It grows intolerable when we attend a New York musical and find that one of the popular numbers deals quite familiarly, even frivolously, with the theme of cosmic disintegration.

Life in the twentieth century is no bowl of cherries. We do feel, however, that arch-pessimism is a romantic, sophomoric attitude of mind. For it is inert and narcissistic and is in itself a revelation of "our troubled times." Turgenev once dashed off an essay on Hamlet and Don Quixote positing, perhaps tendentiously, these polarities of human nature: the introspective idealist who is self-frustrated and the active man of faith who may be frustrated by the world and his own incapabilities, but who, for better or for worse, is an activist, not an ironist.

Irony and *The New Yorker* are not wrong; they are simply inadequate. Irony may make us aware of a problem; it cannot solve it. Therefore *Shenandoah* girds itself in rusty armor, saddles Rocinante, and goes forth to challenge windmills and turn milkmaids into princesses. And we mean by this no celestial, romantic vision. Rather a policy of translating desire into action. Let the man who thinks he is be wretched. For us, there are more important things than musing, "Miserable, wicked me, how interesting I am."

The decay of a culture reflects itself in the decay of language, and in the consequent ineptitude of literature in holding the mirror up to nature, which is the purpose of all art. (And lest the reader feel that certain assumptions are being thrust down his throat, may we invite him to point out an example of art—real art—that does not imitate reality?) Therefore it is the grand purpose of a review, mainly literary, but concerned with the state of art and thought in general, that it should purify the dialect of the tribe, making language a mode of communication characterized by clarity and force, intimately concrete, and involving heightened sensibility and precision. Conjoined with this, and perhaps more fundamental, is the necessity for presenting those ideas and revelations which will some day be recognized as participating in that body of truth to which time is irrelevant; that is, to speak directly, saying whatever bears relevance to the basic and eternal problems of the human situation. The function of such a magazine should be to raise the level of awareness and to provide a cultural center of gravity.

As for the idea that criticism should be constructive, may we point to the fact that we may condemn an egg for being rotten without being outselves prepared to lay one. Such a magazine has, of necessity, a certain arrogance. For it has standards to uphold, and these seem of an important excellence. Its humility, and this very genuine, is in relation to these objectives: the international communication of intelligent ideas—unequivocably and precisely expressed—and the promulgation of art.

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Ryunosuke Akutagawa

AUTUMN

During her college days, all of Nobuku's classmates looked on her as a highly talented authoress. No one doubted that, given time, she'd launch herself on a literary career. Some of them even went to the trouble of inventing a rumor; they said that she had already completed a novel—an *autobiographical* novel—that covered at minimum three hundred pages. When she did graduate from college, however, she found herself obliged to surrender her pen, for the time being anyway, and get married, just like anyone else. She couldn't bring herself to follow her own inclinations, that was the trouble; she kept thinking of her poor widowed mother who'd supported her, and her little sister not even graduated from girls' school, and other things.

Her cousin Shunkichi, still an undergraduate, shared apparently her ambition of crashing the literary set. Since their youngest days they'd been close and now, literature drawing them together, their friendship seemed to grow warmer, and warmer. But Shunkichi, unlike his cousin, was not one to be impressed by a fashionable Tolstoyism; he phrased his satirical asides with a fancy Gallic wit that, sometimes, bruised her seriousness—but, offended or not, she sensed something weighty behind his words.

So often, during her school days, they would go together to concerts and exhibitions, accompanied generally by her sister Teruko. Along the way the three of them were merry, chattering without restraint. Occasionally Teruko got left out of the conversation but she didn't seem to mind: like a child playing alone, she'd steal side-long glances at silk shawls and parasols in shop windows. Noticing, Nobuku tried, always, to draw her back into their talk—just as she contrived, always, to leave her out in the

first place. Shunkichi, stalking slowly through the rushing waves of pedestrians, was not concerned, he was too busy being clever.

As her classmates saw it, this relationship between Nobuku and her cousin could terminate only in marriage. They envied her, they were jealous—especially those who didn't know much about Shunkichi. Nobuku would neither deny nor confirm, she limited herself to casual hints. By graduation time the young couple seemed, to the other girls, as inevitably joined as bride and groom in a wedding photograph.

Their expectations were disappointed, however; Nobuku married another young man as soon as she left college. Product of a commercial high school, he was expecting daily to be dispatched to a trading firm in Osaka. And so two or three days after the ceremony, Nobuku departed with her husband for that distant city. Those who saw them off at Tokyo Central Station reported that she displayed no unusual sentiment: she just smiled brightly to cheer up her poor sister, who looked ready for tears.

Among her classmates this resulted in no small stir and, wondering, they experienced a singularly agreeable feeling, not unsullied by the old jealousy. Some of them, their faith unshaken, assumed that she had merely followed her mother's command; others thought she'd changed her mind. But they were guessing, they knew that. Why hadn't she married Skunkichi? For some time this was the question with which they faced one another, just as though it actually mattered. But in a couple of months they forgot Nobuku, forgot even to bother about the long novel they expected her to write.

Nobuku, meanwhile, had started her new home on the outskirts of Osaka, a home that might be peaceful: the house, which was two-storied, new and rented, stood in the middle of a secluded pine grove. Whenever she was alone, the odor of pine resin and the sunlight seemed to catch the house in a keen fresh silence. In the afternoons of lonesome days she would be sad, she would take a folded pink letter, composed in slender script, from where it was treasured up in her workbox, and read it.

> ...When I think that this is the last day I can be with you, I feel tears gather in my eyes, even as I write. Forgive me, my

> dearest sister; do I know the right words to thank you for your sacrifice?
>
> It's for my sake alone you've made this marriage. You can deny it, but you know it's so. Days ago, when we visited the Imperial Theater, you asked me: "Do you love Shunkichi-san?" Then you said: "If you loved him, you could have him. I'll exert myself for you." I guessed, of course, that you had read the letter I'd written him. And my bitterness made your words sound cynical. (For that too I must apologize.) Do you remember how I blew up and wouldn't answer? Then, when you became engaged, I could only resolve to ask your pardon—you loved him too. (Be honest; I know your mind well enough.) If it hadn't been for me, you'd have gone to him yourself. Yet you said, time and time again, that you didn't care for him. And now you've married a man you don't love.
>
> Do you remember how I took a hen in my arms and told her to bow to you, to you who were leaving? I did it because I wanted even my pet to apologize. And our mother, who understood nothing, broke into tears. Tomorrow you leave for Osaka. I beg you not to forsake your sister, who loves you. Every morning now, as I feed my hens, I shall think of you and cry to myself...

Each time she read it, Nobuku would be conscious of the dampness at her eyelids; in her mind she stepped again into the train, and her sister slipped the note into her hand; but suddenly she would begin to wonder—had she really meant her marriage to be such a sacrifice?—and then, too melancholy for tears, she would gaze sentimentally at the pine grove washed in sunlight, yellowing slowly with twilight's approach.

II.

For the next three months, like most newly-married couples, they led a happy life.

Her husband was an oyster of a man, with a dash of woman in him. After he'd returned from the office and had his supper, he would spend a few hours with her. Nobuku, busy over her needlework, was full of talk about the latest novels and plays, the ones creating a sensation on the literary scene; she couldn't help it if the Christian philosophy of life, flavored by the taste of Women's College students, got woven into her conversation. Her husband

listened curiously, his newspaper unfinished on his knee; but his comments were seldom original.

Almost every Sunday they visited the resorts near Osaka. Whenever she rode in a car or train, Nobuku would stare around her in strict disapproval. The indecorous Kansaites, as if to point up the conspicious delicacy of her husband, felt no shame at eating and drinking in public. Her husband's figure was so very neat, soap seemed to be radiating from hat, sack-coat and russet lace-boots, encircling him in a fresh bubble. Nobuku was particularly impressed in Maiko during their summer holiday, glorying in the contrast he made to some of their colleagues they met in a tea stall there. Her husband, however, didn't seem to find his friends uncouth.

Soon Nobuku remembered her neglected novel, devoting an hour or so to it during her husband's daily absence. When he heard, a sneer hovered about his gentle lips: "So you're really going to be a novelist?" But as she bent over her desk Nobuku discovered that the expected felicity was lacking and, more often than not, she merely rested her cheeks on her hands, listening vacantly to the cicadas chirping among the sunlit pines.

Summer was declining into autumn. One morning, as he was leaving for the office, her husband wanted to change his sweaty collar; but the clean ones were all in the wash. He frowned and, putting on his suspenders, said strangely: "My dear, I trust you realize that novel-writing is not your sole job." Nobuku, her eyes cast down, answered only by brushing his coat.

One evening some days later he read the food-problems report in the newspaper, then asked her to cut down their monthly expenses. "You ought to have improved," he observed. "You're not a girl student any more." She stared at him, helpless for words. After a moment he gave up, returning glumly to his business magazine. In their darkened bedroom, her back to him, she murmured: "I shan't write a novel. I shan't write anything." He was silent. She repeated the words in a low voice, weeping now. He spoke reproachfully, but her broken sobbing continued. Before she knew what was happening, she found herself clasped tightly in his arms.

By the next day, they were a normal, happy couple.

Another time, however, her husband stayed out until midnight and, when he did come home, was too drunk even to take off his raincoat. Her brows knit, Nobuku helped his change his clothes. He stammered: "Was I late enough for you to get some writing done?" As he spoke, his tongue flickered viciously between his soft lips: his breath was stale with liquor.

Lying in bed that night, Nobuku felt the tears running numbly down her cheeks. "Teruko! Teruko!" she whispered again and again. "If you could have seen it!" She slept little, she couldn't escape her husband's sour, heavy breathing.

But by the next morning they had patched it up. Such scenes were repeated, and autumn came on. Now she seldom picked up her pen; her literary conversation no longer interested her husband. In the evenings, by the oblong brazier, they occupied themselves with matters like their household economy, a sort of dessert for his nightly drink. Often she would glance at him with pity, trying to read his face. Sometimes he'd say gaily: "Suppose we have a child—" biting his brand new mustache.

Then the name of her cousin began to appear in print. Nobuku hadn't heard from him since her marriage; her sister's letters told her only that he had graduatetd, that he'd started a literary review. And that was all she wanted to know—until his novels started to be published in the magazines, and she began again to yearn for him: she smiled as she turned the pages. Like the ancient fencing-master, Miyamato-Musashi, who flourished his two famous swords at once, Shunkichi still thrust out with his own weapons of humor and sarcasm. But beneath the smart surface of his prose she fancied she detected a new tone, almost of loneliness, or despair. And, perceiving the tenor of her thoughts, she felt her conscience itch.

After that she treated her husband with more tenderness. On cold winter nights he looked always to find her smiling, brightly, over the brazier at him. Her face was made-up, younger. She sewed industriously, chatting about their wedding celebration in Tokyo. Her husband was surprized and delighted, asking her: "How can you possibly recall such trifles?" She answered only by a provoca-

tive glance from the corners of her eyes; in her heart she wondered, too, why these memories would not die.

Before long she received a letter from her mother: her sister was engaged to Shunkichi, he had a new house in uptown Tokyo. Nobuku began writing immediately—"We shall hate to miss the wedding because we can't leave our house empty—" but, for some reason, her hand faltered. She gazed out at the grove of creeping, insistent pines, pale and dark.

That night she and her husband discussed Teruko's marriage. Smiling faintly, as he always did, he watched her imitate the way her sister talked; but in her mind Nobuku was not speaking to him at all, she spoke to the sister she mimicked. Later, at the end of the evening, he left the brazier wearily, remarking: "It's my bed time," and stroking his soft mustache. Nobuku, undecided on a wedding gift, made empty letters with a pair of tongs in the ashes. Abruptly she raised her eyes. "Isn't it strange that I should have a new brother?" she asked. Her husband answered: "What's strange about it? You've got a sister already, haven't you?" But Nobuku only considered him in silence.

Teruko and Shunkichi celebrated their marriage around the middle of December. That day, just before noon, snow flakes began to flutter in the air. Nobuku ate a solitary lunch; her mouth had a fishy taste. "I wonder if it's snowing in Tokyo—" she thought, bending over the brazier in the dim room. Outside the snow fell furiously; but the taint of fish stuck in her mouth and would not leave.

III.

The following autumn Nobuku accompanied her husband on a business trip to Tokyo; she hadn't been there for ages. He had so many things to do that a visit to her mother's, made shortly after their arrival, was all the time he could spare for her. So she was quite alone in the rickshaw that carried her to her sister's new residence.

The house stood near the end of a row where onion patches began to open out, surrounded by other new houses jammed close together; they looked rented. A roofed gate, a hawthorne hedge,

and washing on a clothes-pole: commonplace enough a house; she felt somehow disappointed.

Surprisingly, her cousin himself answered her knock. Cheerfully he cried: "Hello!" just has he'd always done. "It's good--" (she noticed that his hair was no longer cropped) "—to see you." He said: "Please come in. I'm sorry I'm alone."

"Teruko's out?"

"On an errand," he answered. "So is the maid."

Suddenly shy, she left her gayly-lined coat inside the entrance. Shunkichi ushered her into a two-mat drawing room that did double service as a library. The room was littered in a maze of books, especially a small rosetta-wood desk that, placed near the sliding door, caught the afternoon sun; old newspapers, magazines, and sheets of copy paper were hopelessly scattered around it. The only hint of a young wife was a new harp leaning against the alcove wall. Nobuku looked about curiously.

"When I read your letter, I knew you'd come." Shunkichi looked terribly pleased to see her. "I never thought it would be today." He lit a cigarette. "How do you like Osaka?"

"How do I . . . ? Let's talk about you, Shunkichi-san. Are you happy?" As they spoke she felt the return of the old longing; that she had neglected to write him didn't bother her now.

Warming their hands together over the one brazier, they chatted of various things—his novels, common acquaintances, points of comparison between Osaka and Toyko: there was no shortage of easy topics; but, as if by agreement, neither mentioned the way they were presently living. Nobuku was deeply impressed: he was the same Shunkichi.

Sometimes, though, they fell silent, and she would drop her smiling eyes towards the brazier. She kept expecting something, she didn't know exactly what; but Shunkichi always hit on a new topic to break her reverie. Finally she looked up at him, trying to penetrate his expression. Shunkichi, his face perfectly normal, was drawing on his cigarette.

It was some time later when Teruko came back. She was overjoyed to see her elder sister, and blessed the day. The two of them spoke eagerly, as though Shunkichi were forgotten. Despite her

smile, Nobuku nearly wept as Teruko, her cheeks ruddy with delight, rattled on, about even the hens she still raised. Grinning, Shunkichi trickled smoke complacently through his nostrils.

Just then the maid returned with some letters for him. As he moved to his desk, Teruko looked at her sister with wide eyes. "Wasn't anyone at home when you came?"

"No," Nobuku replied, making her voice casual, "unless you count Shun-san."

"You're not so indispensible," Shunkichi protested to his wife. "I got the tea served all right."

Exchanging secret smiles, the two women ignored him.

And when they sat down to dinner, Teruko announced that the eggs were the product of her hens. As he offered wine to the guest, Shunkichi remarked: "Human life is supported by acts of pillage. Even these eggs prove it;" but his pleasure in eating them didn't seem seriously inhibited. He sounded so much like a socialist, Teruko laughed childishly. Watching them, Nobuku thought suddenly of her dark solitary sitting room, in the pine grove far away.

They talked right through dessert and into the long autumn night. Slightly drunk now, Shunkichi grew sophistical, his crossed legs stretched in the glare of the electric lamp. Nobuku listened, feeling her youth revive. "I am thinking of writing a novel," she said passionately.

Grinning, Shunkichi quoted de Gourmont: "Since the Muses are all women, it is men alone who captivate them as they please."

Both women murmured disapproval. "You'll have to admit, then," Teruko pressed earnestly, "that only women can become musicians. Because Apollo is a male—isn't he?"

So the evening went, and soon it was so late Nobuku had to stay for the night.

They had not yet retired. Sunkichi slid open the veranda door and, dressed in his night clothes, stepped down into the small garden. He called back: "Come look at the moon! Did you ever see anything so bright?" Nobuku alone followed him, slipping her bare feet into the wooden clogs on the bootjack; they were chill with dew.

Through the withered branches of a cypress in the garden's corner she saw the moon; her cousin stood with his face raised towards the dim night sky. "What weeds!" she exclaimed unsteadily, stepping towards him fearfully through the wild stark grass. Shunkichi gazed upward, murmuring: "It's a month old . . ."

For a moment neither spoke; then quietly Shunkichi lowered his eyes to hers. "Let's go look at the hens." Silently she nodded.

Opposite the cypress stood the hen-house, and they walked to it side by side. The corral, covered with straw-mats, possessed only a hazy light; the shady interior smelled of its occupants. Shunkichi peered inside. "They're sleeping," he whispered to his companion. Nobuku stood motionless in the grass, thinking "Those who have been deprived of their eggs . . ." When they returned from the garden, they found Teruko leaning on her husband's desk, staring vacantly at the lamp. On its shade crept a solitary fly.

IV.

The next day, immediately after breakfast, Shunkichi put on his only suit and hurried off to visit a friend's grave: the man had been dead exactly a year and Shunchiki was not one to miss such an anniversary. "Don't leave while I'm gone, dear," he told Nobuku as he jerked on his overcoat. "I'll be back by noon." Nobuku, holding out his hat in her slender hand, only smiled.

After she'd got her husband off, Teruko played the perfect hostess beside the brazier to her sister, offering tea and conversation: she talked, and talked, about the women next door, about Shunkichi's interviewers, about a foreign opera company . . . She seemed in no danger of running down; but Nobuku responded in such vague half-sentences that her sister glanced up in alarm, asking affectionately: "Is something the matter?"

Heavily Nobuku shook her head. "I really don't know."

When the wall clock struck ten, Nobuku stretched languidly. "I suppose it will be a long time before Shun-san gets back?"

Teruko considered the clock. "I suppose," she said indifferently. It was a young wife's satisfied indulgence, Nobuku noted sadly. She buried her chin coyly in her neckband, asking: "You're

happy, aren't you, Teruko-san?" The words were joking, but she couldn't control her voice.

Teruko pouted innocently. "If I am, it serves you right." Then she spoke seriously: "But your own happiness is what matters."

Despite her raised eyebrows, Nobuku was touched. She said: "You don't mean that," but regretted it at once. Teruko stared strangely at her; her lashes trembled as if in repentance. Nobuku forced a laugh. "I'm as happy as I look."

They were silent. The kettle perked in time with the clock's ticking.

At last Teruko said timidly: "But your husband *is* kind, isn't he?" Her pity was more than Nobuku could bear; she fixed her eyes on the newspaper at her knee, mechanically reading the rice prices, just as though it were an Osaka paper.

Then she heard her sister sobbing; she saw Teruko huddled behind the brazier, her face buried in her sleeves. Nobuku said gently: "Don't cry, dear." Teruko paid no attention to her. For a moment Nobuku watched her trembling shoulders with a sense of pleasure; then, too low for the maid to hear, she whispered: "If I've offended you, I apologize. But I can tell you right now that what interests me is *your* happiness. As long as Shun-san loves . . ." She was affected by her own words, her voice grew sentimental.

Teruko raised her tear-wet face; her eyes showed neither sorrow nor anger, they burned with an uncontrolled jealousy. "Then why, sister, last night *why* did you . . ." Again she hid in her sleeves, sobbing harder.

Two or three hours later Nobuku sat stiffly in a covered rickshaw bustling away to the terminal station. Her view of the outside world was limited to the square celluloid window in the front hood; she watched the row of shabby houses, the yellow coppice branches, flowing slowly but steadily past her. Only the cool autumn sky, where white clouds scudded, was constant.

She sat serenely, feeling the loneliness of resignation. After Teruko had stopped crying, there had been a tearful reconciliation; but all the oppressive fact stuck in Nobuku's memory. When

she left without waiting for Shunkichi, she had looked at her sister as an eternal stranger; her mind was frozen with it.

Suddenly she recognized the figure of her cousin as, outlined in soft sunlight, he strode with his cane along the dusty road. Should she stop her carriage? Her heart throbbed painfully. He drew nearer and nearer. She breathed: "Shun-san," then hesitated. And Shunkichi passed on: he had not noticed her. Now through the square window she saw only the thin clouds, the scattered cottages, the sallow leaves of tall trees; a suburban town and nothing more. Forlornly, she sank back in the chilly rickshaw, murmuring wistfully: "Oh autumn . . ."

(*Translated by* HISAO KITAJIMA;

adapted by THOMAS H. CARTER)

Richard K. Thorman

GHQ Reports

I

Among the wounded and the dead
Some returned who had not thought to come,
Having left too much behind.

Now caught they must be fed
The stumps of breath and mind,
Bedded with dead instruments of home

Where the most simple finds
His memorial grow numb,
Till the mattress cracks and a field is in the bed:

They wrapped their lunch in a cancelled map,
Eating out, a picnic in a grove;
The sun too near they were betrayed:
Dig deeper; this is to be afraid.

II

The craft persists in spite of its direction,
As light will bend, refracted but the same;
The red pins are the enemy's position,
The blue are ours, the green are what became
Of Charlemagne at the time of indiscretion.

In the evening by the moonlight,
They would sit all night,
And listen.

The craft is then a kind of celebration,
A green wave, a high falutin name;
Alas, poor Kilroy, seeking absolution
For a bird's cry suddenly gone lame,
Seen by noncoms sobbing his contrition

In the evening by the moonlight.

III

In the camps recurrent dreams are best,
The night enclosed in a wire fence becomes
The captives' prisoner and they are free
Till their captors sleep and night is caught again.

Beyond the fence there is quantity and name,
Taught by old men who have survived
From the beginning, swimming in the rain.
But everything constrained must be revived,
Working back from the end to the beginning
And every man is Adam, the namer of things.

Ghost Story

Of Scaramouch, the immortality;
Excoriate his ghost, his pity's sake,
As if too many shadows were enough;
This is cowardice outdone. The man
Who faced himself and was not overcome
Died at cock's crow; him we remember
At night, when the long quarters piled as snow
In crevices, transfer to a frame
That was not, could never be, foreseen;
Or the time between when the snow disintegrates
In spectral maunderings, Oh Scaramouch.

Seventy fathoms will not do to drown
A man; but you, poseur, will bob and float
Squirting water through your carious teeth.
The first two acts are yours,
But in the third the fall will first appear,
The flood is next and you will seem to swim;
The players will not hear most secret words,
Your host will look aside as you seduce

His wife; but she will turn in the final act
And kill you as the curtain drops:
This time the murder may be real, the blood.

The same scene in another town is played;
Will it never end, will it always be the same?
Meanwhile the blood is paint,
Her dagger wood. Is this the theme?
An absolute among conservatives,
You save yourself, do not damn the rest.
Flood and snow, these thing have always been;
Held in the frame of the proscenium
The looking glass cannot betray itself:
Immortal strut and stance, bare feet
On the naked boards, the movement and the dance.

Ashley Brown

TURGENEV

It is now almost exactly a century since Turgenev was first rendered into our language (the first translation was made by way of the French in 1855), and since that time the work of the Russian novelist has survived various phases of popularity in the English-speaking world. During his lifetime he was somewhat fortuitously celebrated as the writer through whom mute Russia at last became articulate—an honor properly due his master Pushkin. His reputation then was inevitably associated with a political and social situation to which Western readers could hardly to respond without interest: the post-Napoleonic world everywhere was at a constant pitch of excitement, and nowhere more than in the Russia of Alexander II, which offered, in addition to the melodrama of subversive politics, the novelty of an exotic setting. But when it presently became apparent that Turgenev was no longer the voice of his native land, even his best work seemed to have lost some of its initial force.

At the beginning of this century the indefatigible Constance Garnett and Isabel Hapgood produced two series of translations which remained "standard" for a generation decisively influenced by the great 19th Century Continental writers. This was a sophisticated generation, quick to appropriate a variety of Russian predecessors, not only Turgenev and Tolstoy, but Gogol, Dostoevsky, Goncharov, and Checkhov. By the 1920's, when the first biography of Turgenev in English appeared (that by Avrahm Yarmolinsky) this novelist appeared to be permanently established as an amiable minor figure in a literature of unquestioned importance.

Now a series of new translations makes Turgenev available for another generation, who will perhaps see him as a writer directly in the modern tradition.[1] I, for example, have reread most of his books with the idea that he has always been for us a writer's writer: that is, he has been admired by Henry James, Ford Madox Ford,

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[1] *The Borzoi Turgenev* contains in one volume four of the novels *(Rudin,*

Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, and Caroline Gordon, and he may be said to be "reflected" in a number of ways in the work of these British and American contemporaries. (I should also mention that Turgenev is well-known in Ireland; Frank O'Connor and Seán O'Faoláin have borrowed one of his titles, and Mr. O'Connor has written a critical study in Gaelic.) While it would no doubt be profitable to pursue these literary comparisons for some length, I should prefer not to anglicize Turgenev any more than he has been. His work has sufficient attractions in itself.

Coinciding with these translations is a biographical study by David Magarshack, the first to appear in England.[2] Although Mr. Magarshack's book—an important one—will not entirely supersede Mr. Yarmolinsky's, it does increase our knowledge of the subject, especially in connection with Turgenev's residence in Paris after the Franco-Prussian War. Readers of Edmond de Goncourt's *Journal* and Flaubert's letters have always been aware of Turgenev's eminent position in that charmed group of littérateurs who flourished in the Paris of those years—a kind of novelists' heaven, I should think. But it is well to remember that Flaubert and de Goncourt, close friends of Turgenev that they were, knew him only as the Good European. We also know him, thanks to his biographers, as he presented himself to his Russian contemporaries, and that is a matter of some importance.

If we no longer read Turgenev as an authoritative commentator on 19th Century Russian politics, we certainly do not want to abstract him altogether from a situation he had to face most of his life. Still, his work has undoubtedly suffered at the hands of critics who have insisted on stripping it down to an ideological framework which no longer seems to bear much weight. Thus,

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On the Eve, Fathers and Sons, and *Smoke)* and three long stories, translated by Harry Stevens. Knopf. 1950.

A Sportsman's Notebook is translated by Charles and Natasha Hepburn. The Cresset Press, London. 1950.

The play, *A Month in the Country,* is adapted by Emlyn Williams. Heinemann, London. 1953.

[2]David Margarshack, *Turgenev.* Faber and Faber, London, and the Grove Press, New York. 1954.

a routine way to classify *Fathers and Sons* is to say that it draws attention to the idea of nihilism; the remark is misleading insofar as it distracts our reading of the novel and causes our attention to veer past it towards the History of Ideas.

Turgenev has not left his readers entirely in the dark about the nature of creative instincts. We have a number of his statements which could be useful as starting points for criticism, and none more authoritative than that reported by Henry James:

> I have always fondly remembered a remark that I heard fall years ago from the lips of Ivan Turgenev in regard to his own experience of the usual origin of the fictive picture. It began for him almost always with the vision of some person or persons, who hovered before him, soliciting him, as the active or passive figure, interesting him and appealing to him just as they were and by what they were. He saw them, in that fashion, as *disposibles,* saw them subject to the chances, the complications of existence, saw them vividly, but then had to find out for them the right relations, those that would most bring them out; to imagine, to invent and select and piece together the situations most useful and favorable to the sense of the creatures themselves, the complications they would be most likely to produce and to feel.
>
> "To arrive at these things is to arrive at my 'story,'" he said, "and that's the way I look for it. The result is that I'm often accused of not having story enough. I seem to myself to have as much as I need—to show my people, to exhibit their relations with each other; for that is all my measure. If I watch them long enough I see them come together, I see them *placed,* I see them engaged in this or that act and in this or that difficulty . . ."[3]

Now this statement, properly understood, is almost a credo for Turgenev: it not only emphasizes the special condition of his fictional art, it prepares us for its characteristic limitations. Although Turgenev and Flaubert were alike in being dependent on living models as the subjects for their finest work, Turgenev was almost uniquely the close observer: his successful effects were due entirely to what he had seen. (James and Conrad, on the other hand, often sought to distance themselves from their subjects, and James

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[3]James, Preface to Volume III in the New York Edition of his works.

could erect an entire novel on the strength of a chance remark overheard at a dinner-party.)

Turgenev's art is seen at its purest in the early collection of stories and sketches entitled *A Sportsman's Notebook* (mostly written in Paris between 1848 and 1850). It is difficult for us to believe that this book was once received as a calculated attack on the institution of serfdom. We say, in our subsequent wisdom, that it was Turgenev's great fidelity to concrete life, in all its dignity and horror, that impressed the original readers. The narrator, a gentleman hunter, is never presented as anyone but the author himself; but his high station in the province, although strictly defined, does not prevent his raving access to a considerable range of social behavior. He has only to introduce a character to convince us that he is observing and recording something that nobody has attempted before. An old liberated serf:

> . . . He was a man of about seventy, with an agreeable, regular face. He wore an almost constant smile, the sort of smile that is now seen only on the faces of survivors from the days of Catherine the Great; a smile that is both benign and stately; when he spoke, his lips parted and came together again slowly, his eyes narrowed amiably and the words came out with a slightly nasal tone. His manner of blowing his nose or taking snuff was equally unhurried, as of a man engrossed in a serious business.

This sort of portraiture merely renders the subject as something stationary, a person encountered on an afternoon's walk. The finest stories are actions built up with a brilliant array of verbal effects; even as the narrator "adds on" something of his own, he seldom leads us to believe that he is inventing something not inherent in the scene.

Such is "The Singers," in which the narrator observed a group of peasants in a mean country tavern, the occasion being a singing match between two formidable opponents. Yet "observes" hardly begins to account for the achievement of this story. Near the beginning we have what is customarily called setting:

> It was an unbearably sultry July day, when I truged slowly, accompanied by my dog, up the Kolotovka ravine in the direction of the "Snug Nook" pot-house. The sun was blazing away in the sky with a kind of fury; it was mercilessly, bak-

> ingly hot; the air was absolutely saturated with choking dust. Glossy rooks and crows, with gaping beaks, looked piteously at the passer-by as if to beg his sympathy; only the sparrows were undistressed and, fluffing out their feathers, twittered and scuffled about the fences even more actively than usual, or flew up from the dusty road in a flock, or hovered in grey clouds over the green hemp-yard. I was tortured by thirst. There was no water at hand: at Kolotovka, as in many other steppe-villages, in the absence of springs and wells, the peasants drink a sort of liquid filth from a pond... But who would give the name of water to this repulsive draught? I had it in mind to ask Nikolai Ivanich for a glass of beer or kvass.

At the climax Turgenev modulates to another tonality:

> ... His voice grew steadily in strength, firmness and breadth. One evening, I remember, at low tide, on the flat sandy shore of the sea, which was roaring away menacingly and dully in the distance, I saw a great white gull: it was sitting, motionless, its silky breast turned towards the scarlet radiance of sunset, now and then slowly stretching its long wings towards the familiar sea, towards the low blood-red sun; I remember it as I listened to Yasha. He sang, completely oblivious of his rival and of us all, but clearly sustained, as waves lift a strong swimmer, by our silent passionate attention. He sang, and with every note there floated out something noble and immeasurably large, like familiar steppe-country unfolding before you, stretching away into the boundless distance.

Now we can see that the story turns on the overwhelming impression of thirst and barrenness which Yasha's song has alleviated: the dusty field-birds have been transfigured as the white gull. A lesser writer might have ended on the image of high contrast, superb as it is, but Turgenev leaves us with the raucous noise of the drunken company in the tavern, as though to remind us that the ecstatic moment could not last. James and Ford called this a "perfect poem," and in a sense they were correct. Turgenev perfected a certain genre of prose to such an extent that romantic landscape poetry, the sort which was so pervasive during the 19th Century, with its myopic perceptions and diffusion of language, no longer had any real justification. This is the well-written prose with which poetry would henceforth have to compete.

Turgenev's instincts are all for the tensions of dramatic form,

however, and even in the longer fictions he never indulges himself in descriptive writing for its own sake. What the few critics of his work seldom mention is his very decided gift for social comedy, a mode in which he easily writes as early as the play *A Month in the Country* (1850). Here are the scene and the situation which he works to advantage in nearly all the novels: the provincial aristocracy of the 1840's and 50's, invaded by a protagonist who, unwittingly or not, challenges its basic assumptions. I am inclined to think that his comprehension of this situation, his recurring *donnée,* released his talent for its best efforts.

Turgenev knew his provincial society intimately, perhaps even better than Tolstoy, and he was not unaware of the rich comic possibilities latent in a class who were infatuated with Western ideas and manners, who sometimes had to learn Russian from their own serfs (society was divided into those who spoke French and those who did not). The young Hegelian fresh from the metaphysical precincts of Berlin, the *boulevardier,* the would-be British gentleman with a state for port and club-life, the lady with "advanced" ideas à la George Sand, these were familiar types in the farthest reaches of the countryside. Turgenev seldom misses an opportunity to exploit these incongruities; indeed, characters are sometimes introduced only to be laughed at. Thus, a French governess:

> ...Mademoiselle Moreau was a tiny wrinkled creature with little birdlike ways and a bird's intellect. In her youth she had led a very dissipated life, but in old age she had only two passions left—gluttony and cards. When she had eaten her fill, and was neither playing cards nor chattering, her face assumed an expression almost death-like. She was sitting, looking, breathing—yet it was clear there was not an idea in her head. One could not even call her good-natured. Birds are not good-natured. Either as a result of her frivolous youth or the air of Paris, which she had breathed from childhood, a kind of cheap universal skepticism had found its way into her, usually expressed by the words:*tout ça c'est des bêtises.* She spoke ungrammatically, but in a pure Parisian jargon, did not talk scandal and had no caprices—what more can one desire in a governess?[4]

[4]*A Nest of Gentlefolk,* translated by Constance Garnett. Heinemann. 1911. p. 213.

The comedy sometimes verges on stage situation. An adulterous wife recovers her social standing through the power of music:

> Varvara Pavlovna began suddenly playing a noisy waltz of Strauss, opening with such a loud and rapid trill that Gedeonovsky was quite startled. In the very middle of the waltz she suddenly passed into a pathetic motive, and finished up with an air from "Lucia" *Fra poco* . . . She reflected that lively music was not in keeping with her position. The air from "Lucia," with emphasis on the sentimental passages, moved Marya Dmitrievna greatly.
>
> "What soul!" she observed in an undertone to Gedeonovsky.
>
> "A *sylphide!*" repeated Gedeonovsky, raising his eyes towards heaven.[5]

Turgenev does not hesitate to lower the tension of quite serious episodes: a duel is threatened, only to end in travesty; an interminable eulogy is followed by a toast in which champagne glasses are almost shattered; a frightened dog wanders into a family prayer service. The play of the comic impulse, which at first may seem merely trifling, is important in that it "civilizes" a situation otherwise liable to be melodramatic and sentimental: it allows Turgenev to gain his aesthetic distance.

This is the scene on which his protagonists perform. The typical Turgenev hero—and he is seldom stereotyped—is a "man from nowhere."[6] His entrance is more or less unexpected, his visit is usually short, but his action, his mere presence always brings disturbing results. In *A Month in the Country* the tutor Beliaev simply by his appearance changes more than one set of relationships in a large household. Here the prevailing tone is only gracefully elegiac, as in *Daisy Miller;* and we never really see very far beyond the limits of the scene before us. Nevertheless, the recurring pattern of the novelist's later work is already fully established in this delightful stage piece, which in itself has considerable merit.[7]

With his first novel, *Rudin,* (1885), Turgenev at once showed

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[5] *Ibid,* pp. 249-250.

[6] The phrase is Hugh Kenner's, used in connection with Wyndham Lewis.

[7] Turgenev's play deserves to be performed as well as read. The Old Vic produced Emlyn Williams' adaptation in 1943 with considerable success.

how successful he could be with his chosen situation. Rudin is a permanently disaffected man of great personal charm. When he first turns up at a provincial estate his powers of persuasion seem almost unlimited; as we presently discover, he is trying to escape a frightening past of abandoned friendships. (Nowadays we would say that he "runs through people.") At the climactic scene, Turgenev has him momentarily involved with Natalia, his hostess' young daughter, who would defy every social convention to follow him. The scene is alive, thought paradoxically forbidding, with natural detail: a desiccated pond; the "scanty gray shells" of a dead oak wood; the two great pines at whose feet a terrible crime was said to have been committed. Yet it is sunrise and we expect a gesture of passionate resignation at the very least. When Rudin blandly tells this high-spirited girl she is merely "worked up," his social failure (idealism overplayed, as it were) seems complete, and the scene flattens out with the girl running across the fields.[8] We follow his remaining misfortunes with some sympathy, as we watch the ruin of a great talent unable to accept the limits of human condition; his is a victory of will over feeling.

Certainly *Rudin* is not without political overtones. The protagonist exemplifies something of the aimless idealism which afflicted the most intelligent of the young aristocracy in Turgenev's generation. But this historical fact, although undoubtedly interesting in itself, can do no more than add another level of meaning for us. We may see Rudin, like Flaubert's Frédéric Moreau, as the ancestor of many an unrealized young man of our own time. The explicitly policital note occurs at the last, when Rudin dies on a barricade in the Paris of the 1848 revolution. This ending did not appear in the original edition, and Turgenev has been censured for adding it as an afterthought. Dostoevsky, however, maintained otherwise:

> ... Rudin was a Russian, a full-fledged Russian, who ran away to Paris to give his life for a cause which, according to you, was quite alien to him. He was a Russian in the strictest sense

[8]Since it is commonly known that Rudin is based on the youth of the revolutionist Bakunin, whom Turgenev knew at one time, the reader is tempted to bring data from biography into an "interpretation" of the novel: for example, Edmund Wilson's theory (in *To the Finland Station)* that Bakunin was sexually impotent. We may know this, but Turgenev very likely did not.

> precisely for the reason that the cause for which he died in Paris was by no means so alien to him as it would have been to an Englishman or a German, since a European, universal, all-humanitarian cause has long since ceased to be alien to a Russian. This is Rudin's distinguishing mark. Strictly speaking, Rudin's tragedy lay in the fact that he found no labor to perform on his own soil, and died in a foreign land, but not so foreign as you maintain.[9]

Allowing for Dostoevsky's usual bias towards the slavophil, I think we can consider this a vindication of the novel's ending. It would not have done for Rudin simply to have drifted away; and his final gesture, however empty it may seem, is his attempt to break through his life into some kind of moral action.

The Turgenev protagonists are always defined by their relation to women. Lavretsky, the hero of *A Nest of Gentlefolk* (1859), is cuckolded by his wife Varcara, a scheming society belle whom he meets as a student in St. Petersburg, the Europeanized capital, the veritable symbol of specious modernism. Mistakenly believing Varvara dead, he returns from Paris to his province, and presently he conceives a gentle passion for Liza, a young girl whom we are led to see as the quintessence of modest virtue. But Varvara reappears, the sad love affair must yield to conventional morality, and Lavretsky denounces the false wife: the novel's "political" meaning stems largely from his firm rejection of the worldly Varvara. As he works out his salvation through a kind of humility, he repossesses, somewhat like the later Tolstoy, the ways of the old Russia of his youth.

I do not suppose that Liza will ever again seem as attractive as she did to the late-Victorian critics, who saw her as testimony to the essential nobility of Russian womanhood (she retires to a convent after abdicating her attachment to Lavretsky). We are likely to find her far less convincing than her rival Varvara, whose malevolence is more amusing than wicked. Prince Mirsky, in hs admirable *History of Russian Literature,* suggests that more than

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[9]Dostoevsky, *Dairy of a Writer:* 1880. I should like to think that when Dostoevsky wrote this, near the end of his life, he no longer assented to the malicious caricature of Turgenev in *The Possessed.*

one heroine was created after the model of the unforgettable Titiana in Pushkin's *Evgeny Onegin;* and we may suppose that this is the case here. At any rate, Liza is too much the "type" of the 19th Century virtue to sustain much fictional interest for us (the title of an early translation, *Liza,* overstresses this character's importance; the story is plainly Lavretsky's). The distinction of the novel, however, is largely due to its composition of individual scenes, in which the dramatist Turgenev, drawing on his knowledge of provincial society, confronts Lavretsky with a dozen minor characters, each subordinate to and illuminative of Lavretsky's essential strength. Over much of the action presides old Maria Timofyevna, with her folk proverbs and her inherited wisdom, a survivor from a more vigorous age; it is she who allows us to see beyond the immediate scene.

It is generally understood that Turgenev, after the publication of his second novel, assumed a rôle to which he did not aspire, and for which he was certainly ill-suited. His Russian public, with its extraordinary knowledge of Western ideas and its sense of historic transition, demanded that he create the image of a full-scale hero. But Turgenev, like Flaubert, was by nature anti-heroic: it was in fact his perception of the false pretenses of heroism that makes him one of the first modern artists in fiction. We can see in *On the Eve* (1860) how far once he was betrayed by an intention that ran counter to his instincts: to deliberately establish *consciously* heroic characters. The "man from nowhere" in this novel is a young Bulgarian revolutionist, Insarov, who impresses himself on a rural household, and especially its strong-willed daughter, who eventually follows him from Russia. Turgenev is much too close to this girl, Yelena (he even resorts to passages from her diary), and in partially abandoning his prevailing "scenic" method he blurs our perception of Insarov. But Insarov never really performs: he exists only in Yelena's imagination as the embodiment of a will-to-patriotism, and he seems most credible at his death, which results from fever. In the final chapters Turgenev shifts the unreality of the affair to Venice, that timeless stage-setting for the end of romantic love. We are not at all surprised to learn that Insarov was not conceived after any actual person

Turgenev observed: this singular failure in characterization is an attempt to make idea serve as image.

In *Fathers and Sons* (1862), the summit of his fictional achievement, Turgenev submits his nest of gentlefolk to the contemptuous scrunity of Bazarov, a medical student and an avowed nihilist. It is sometimes said that Turgenev misplaces Bazarov in this setting, but I think he is correct in having his protagonist act out his misfortune against indifferent circumstances: the supreme irony is that Bazarov is so little *understood.* He would live beyond, if not destroy, every form of social authority, including his family. But it is precisely his relation to his parents—an elderly couple surviving from the old provincial dispensation—that exhibits him as sympathetic and diffuses his glib positivism.

In a famous essay on Hamlet and Don Quixote, Turgenev proposed the idea that mankind can be divided, for fictional purposes, into variants of these two archetypal figures. While it is to his credit that he seldom relied on any such idea in practice, the theory may seem relevant to *Fathers and Sons* in this respect: Bazarov, who tries to will himself into significance, is the form of a Hamlet; but his attempt to live on an abstract plane, lacking any true metaphysical or social meaning, is absurd, even quixotic; he is undone by those concrete events which exceed his calculations. Turgenev never uses his gift for comedy to better purpose than in this novel, where he constantly puts the humorless Bazarov into situations which ended in anti-climax. Thus, a major action involves Bazarov's attachment to Anna Sergyevna, a high-minded beauty whom he meets at a ball. He follows her to her estate and proposes a romantic liaison, which she rejects: her sexless egoism is complementary to his studied aggressiveness. This episode, rich in passionate nuance, is played out in terms of the most correct manners; one form of vanity is neutralized by another.

Otherwise, Bazarov is hopelessly at odds with his acquaintances. He indifferently fights a duel with one of his hosts, he talks nihilism to anyone polite enough to listen, he insults almost everyone. The perspectives of the novel, whether intentionally or not, reveal the absurdity of Bazarov's career. Only at the premonition of death (caused by accidental blood poisoning) does he take on heroic

proportions; or rather, he transcends his arrogance by achieving some *rapport* with human beings. The death scene, which brings Anna Sergyevna and Bazarov's parents together in mourning, confers on him a dignity towards which, as an uncompromising nihilist, he could only strain.

It is easy to see political meanings in *Fathers and Sons*. Turgenev's public, in fact, saw every possible meaning in it: the reactionaries saw it as a caricature of the revolutionary generation; the nihilists themselves insisted that Bazarov was a spurious character. The demands made on Turgenev's fictional illusion by his contemporaries may seem excessive to us, but perhaps we should remember that 19th Century Russia, like Elizabethan England, was teeming with political energies. Every writer was fated to deal, however indirectly, with the social transition which was taking place within a few decades of Russian history, and almost any novel would be read in terms of temporary political issues. The English-speaking reader, however, is fortunately absolved from taking sides in these controversies. What matters to us us is that Turgenev could use his special subject, which happened to be at hand, as the medium for the great theme of modern literature: the individual's revolt against society, and the nature of the heroism he assumes in this action.

Turgenev never repeated the success of *Fathers and Sons*. The last two novels, relative failures, indicate his distance from the Russia of his youth; his efforts to extend the range of his subject were ill-founded. *Smoke* (1867) is in effect a rewriting of *A Nest of Gentlefolk*, set in Baden-Baden after the Emancipation of 1862. One might suppose that Turgenev, with his knowledge of several European cultures, would naturally attempt the international theme, but the result in this case is a curiously impoverished treatment of Russians in the German resort city. The protagonist, Litvinov, steers his course among several antagonistic countrymen, each committed to a political attitude current in the 1860's. Litvinov is involved with two women: Irena, a fascinating siren reminiscent of Varvara in the earlier novel; and Tatiana, the "natural" heroine, whose very name suggests another derivation from Pushkin's young lady. If this novel has any true development, it

consists in Litinov's disenchantment with Irena (a wonderfully credible character) and his return to Russia, where he is reunited with Tatiana in what James called a 'bread Sauce" of happy ending. The title itself is a metaphor referring to the wayward forms of opinion expressed by the Russian colony at Baden; the political talk, although sometimes amusing, nearly always seems extraneous to Litvinov's main interests. *Smoke,* like almost everything else that Turgenev wrote, has its fine moments, but it marks a decided decline in its author's powers.

Virgin Soil (1877) in some ways promised to be Turgenev's best work. I cannot agree with Edward Garnett that it is artistically the least perfect of the novels.[10] Although spacious in its considerable length, it is superbly organized around a central intelligence, Nejdanov. This character, the illegitimate son of a nobleman and in the end a suicide, belongs to no class, but he has the advantage of being able to move easily through various social strata; hence, he sees more than any other character. His dislocation, too , is used to some effect to "mirror" the lack of cohesion in Russian society. The real defect here is Turgenev's failure to present a convincing action in which the characters can realize themselves. Thus, the opening chapters purport to render a revolutionary group in St. Petersburg, and this is the sort of thing we have:

> Ostrodumov remained motionless for a time, then he looked round, stood up, bent down, turned up one of the legs of his trousers and carefully pulled a piece of blue paper out of his high book, blew at it for some reason or another, and handed it to Nejdanov. The latter took the piece of paper, unfolded it, read it carefully, and passed it on to Mashurina. She stood up, also read it, and handed it back to Nejdanov, although Paklin had extended his hand for it. Nejdanov shrugged his shoulder and gave the secret letter to Paklin. The latter scanned the paper in his turn, pressed his lips together significantly, and laid it solemnly on the table. Ostrodumov took it, lit a large match, which exhaled a strong odour of sulphur, lifted

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[10]Edward Garnett's *Turgenev* (1917), the only full-length critique in English, is a late-Victorian essay which is now quite unsatisfactory, especially in its estimate of Turgenev's Russian contemporaries. James's more modest essay (1876) is still of some value, despite its obvious limitation in being a pioneering study.

> the paper high above his head, as if showing to all present, set fire to it, and, regardless of his fingers, put the ashes into the stove. No one moved or pronounced a word during this proceeding; all had their eyes fixed on the floor . . .[11]

The conspiratorial activity never becomes more than a matter of gesture: stealthy footfalls, chain-smoking, meaningless exits, and such trivia. Turgenev was of course acquainted with some genuine revolutionaries, but here he seems unable to put them into any precise perspective. Consequently, what should be serious is sometimes unintentionally funny when he withholds his customary irony.

The "man from nowhere" is Solomin, an engineer, clearly meant to be an heroic figure. But Solomin performs no more meaningfully than the others; Turgenev, in fact must articulate him for us:

> . . . He himself belonged to the people, and fully realized that the great bulk of them, without whom one can do nothing, were still quite indifferent, that they must first be prepared, by quite different means and for entirely different ends than the upper classes. So he held aloof, not from a sense of superiority, but as an ordinary man with a few independent ideas, who did not wish to ruin himself or others in vain . . .[12]

Solomin, then, is the last of the heroes, unsatisfactory though he remains. Turgenev had clearly exhausted his resources by this time. Even up to his death (1883), however, he continued to produce occasional miniature successes. The body of his best work (I have not mentioned several brilliant stories) is enough to warrant our recovering him as one of the masters of fiction. I suppose he will never again seem up to the stature of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, but he looks very fine indeed beside his Western contemporaries. And as I have pointed out earlier, he continues to be a living force in our own fictional tradition.

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[11] *Virgin Soil,* translated by R. S. Townsend. Everyman's Library. pp.12-13.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

Thomas Cole

Willows

In summertime the willows bend
With green along their subtle limbs,
And any way the weathers go
Those silken panels to and fro
Against the hyphened air portend
Such grace the clearest vista dims.

One need not go beyond this park
To know the everlasting grief
That fills the heart and breaks the mind
When wintertime is all unkind,
But wait until the mist and dark
Obliterate the willow's leaf.

The Crows

In early winter one can see
Black crows which when the sunlight tips
Them right turn purple, blue, or
Red as red Dutch barns.
                                        Those birds
Circle October's golden fields
Where stand the half-nude pin oaks by
The lake. Such trees assume their leanness
In the glass, likening themselves
To maidens by a shore,
Their green silk summer gowns curled
At their feet.
                                        Alight, crows
And caw within those boughs, and feign
A summer song to lend them grace.
What wind there is is brittle and the oaks
Chatter like castanets.

> the paper high above his head, as if showing to all present, set fire to it, and, regardless of his fingers, put the ashes into the stove. No one moved or pronounced a word during this proceeding; all had their eyes fixed on the floor . . .[11]

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Them right turn purple, blue, or
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Where stand the half-nude pin oaks by
The lake. Such trees assume their leanness
In the glass, likening themselves
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At their feet.
                                        Alight, crows
And caw within those boughs, and feign
A summer song to lend them grace.
What wind there is is brittle and the oaks
Chatter like castanets.

Wong Wei

山居秋暝

王維

空山新雨後。天氣晚來秋。
明月松間照。清泉石上流。
竹喧歸浣女。蓮動下漁舟。
隨意春芳歇。王孫自可留。

Staying in the Mountain At Autumn's Dusk

Empty hill after new rain;

in late autumn weather

a pure stream glides over the rocks—

washer girls sing through bamboos;

lotus bends under small boat,

relax if you like as T'sun Fong does,

even a king or duke would loaf here!

Translated by DAVID MCCALL GORDON

John Reid

THE NOVELIST'S EYE

A Snapshot Album

I

The train was on time. The principal piazza lay
Under soot night. I went on to the Lungo Mare
Where the gun-metal dawn showed waves sprinting
To the breakwater. Waiters were out, sweeping
Water back from terrace tables while breakers kept
Refilling puddles—crash of glass! To the left
Buildings, in yellows. And to the right the sea
After a storm, 6 A.M., December '37. Centre: me,
Age twenty-two for a week. And somewhere in Rapallo
Ezra Pound. I went on, found food, walked to & fro
Saw villas in the early light, yachts in harbour,
DUCE DUCE DUCE white on iron fences, and flowers
Beyond stone walls. Nine. In a park I asked a man
'Dov è Via Marsala?' Did he not speak Italian?
I found the street, a canyon behind the waterfront
Hotels. Then at number twelve I began to mount
To meet Gaudiers' profile or a photo in a book.
She greeted me politely, shook hands. I stook
There while she said Ezra was out for a haircut,
Would I come in? A narrow room, wicker chairs—not
What I'd expected. Pound arrived soon, breathless,
A big man, slightly overweight. I remember this
Impression: like a butcher, genial and red-faced.
Profile and photo faded. So arrived 'the novelist.'

II

'The novelist's eye' said Ez, trying to educate
Recalcitrant material: talk of grammar while we ate

In the Albergo Rapallo, Gaudier's bust at the door;
Told how Hemingway lost early manuscripts, poor
Joyce fled rats and thunderstorms; of my favorite
Writer, Wyndham Lewis; 'money at the root of it—
Read Hollis;' lent me Trollope, Jane Austen and
'The Four Books.' He had no use for England.
And suggested a place to board, at number sixteen.
Next day we went to see his parents; they, seen
In memory, seem pleasant, aged, a little lonely.
A tailor cut his trousers to my size. 'A'nt Dorothy'
Had me in for tea. Then in a fifth floor room
I worked up a rage at my own stupidity and bred
Monsters, bright mirrors of conceit, in my head.
These I called people, put them in 'Cedar Falls'
Where I grew up. And now if the memory appals
So did the doing: I thought these visions real
And celebrated in their company my blind appeal
To reason and despair. In mid-January I turned
To Pound for help: how reflect the depression
In young men—'nothing to do,' no goal, apathy?
'Their sha-hirt cuuvs would begin,' he said to me,
'Tuhah fruh-*hay*.' I sneered, departed, and used
His observation—now held by me to be the root
Of technique. He would repeat 'Something to say,
No man can make his thought fit *in*to a cliché'
Passing judgment on *nous autres jeunes* who heard
And went home to seek, like masks, 'the right word.'

III

Others came: Ronald Duncan, Fox from Frobenius,
Adrian Stokes, and Por the fascisti economist;
Renatta who played the piano (Vivaldi sonate).
and 'Sam Borey' calling himself philosopher: he
Cheated a boatman; stuttered at Ez—who was M.
In the *Criterion?* Ez grinned, told of Ole Possum
And a stray cat cared for—and on till Borey's chin
Quivered. Ez laughted. 'M.? What the cat dragged in!'

Borey was the worst. Alone, he paid off old sores
By filling my ears with tales of p-p-poxy whores.
Better Bailey in his yellow waistcoat, dirty jokes,
Purple face and white moustaches with the droops
Or the Boston admiral's wife (hating each other:
A comedy of manners) or any of the rest who were
To be found in cafes: Col. Bahbah, the Baroness
With the Nansen passport, Mrs. T., a girl dressed
In blue—all fit subjects for an absent Waugh
But not for Bailey who, with J. R., 'the bevaugh,'
Drank much and went for walks. I wrote of boredom;
Bailey, in secrecy, of a mad poet (E. P.). For him
Spring meant 'return to England' and for me
'Escape from literature' I hoped—out of Italy
And into North Africa. Pound shocked, I gave way
To him and 'culture,' left for Florence in May.

IV

Heat came down from the hills and from across
The Gulf of Liguria. The English gone; 'the boss'
Passed through Rapallo; I back from Florence,
Ezra in Siena. Buses brought Italians—Germans!
I met Nancy Monti and Rolando, like a plump
Iroquois; Guido Hess, Bargis—poets. Wills slump,
Senses sing; the Italian artist lives on talking—
Though Rolando painted me: like this, standing

I am on my terrace, tanned, black-bearded,
Smiling at the sea. Trunks in my hand, soon I'll be
In them. I wear an orange shirt, blue jacket,
Worries and hopes which water will wash from me.

We swam daily. Midsummer brought stinging
Jellyfish to the surface, like drowned deeds.
'Beh, il romanzo metifisico . . . Un' altra
Anisetta?' Then in August came Giulietta . . .

Giulietta was blonde, liked Guido best.
                                                            In the theatre
A rat ran over our feet. We argued at D.'s
About morality. 'D 'accordo' I said to Guido
When he prounced 'these things relative,'
Shaped by the age, since we were. Guilietta
Liked Guido best. In Rome, at the università,
She lost her reason. We asked her 'to live.'

I went to see his works of art, in the heat.
Father Chute was bearded, half-blind, a friend
Of Gill and Stanley Spencer. He showed me
A woodcut of Christ crucified: beauty in agony.
Then, his altar. I who fled can now return
To ask pardon and these questions

Deus aeterne, what can I now say
Of them and I no better than they?
What tell? How keep from posing
My self silent, let words only sing
Of those days, show snaps, for all
Else is death, which I must pull
Through these memories, like a string
Through coins. How keep from posing?

By nails through hands that bleed
Love. For you did I plead as I do
Now for them. See steadily, whole
As you can; no more is asked so give
No more than this: life is and shall be
Thus unless relieved by Me.

V

September. The novel lies on a table, four inches
Of sloppiness. I show what I dare. Pound finishes
Reading—blue pencilling! 'HELL!' And, twice: 'O.K.'
I am punch-drunk with shame. 'The novelist's eye'
Has failed to portray more than an empty shell,

Carcass of a past I've killed. I call Ez the devil;
I mount to my hell. 'A'nt' Dorothy's in hospital
And Ezra, in a wicker chair, declaims avuncular
Advice. 'Buy good shoes. And since your father
Isn't here . . . Be polite, don't follow my example
Talking like a specialist to plain people. What'll
You do for money? Abjure Joyce, read *Bleak House;*
Talk to May Sinclair and Rebecca West. You must
Study your Flaubert more. Beware of colds.' So
Ezra, 'Uncle Ez,' advised me. I do not know
Much more. Ten years. Perhaps I've sorted sanity
From prejudice, in that time. 'Don't follow me.
You've been much preoccupied with your own
Problem' he said. And in the hills that horseshoe
Rapallo a man built a Roman theatre which you
Will find among the grass and violet: his wife
Acted there 'for him alone' and dreamed of life
Elsewhere, they say, and faded, died. We can find
No centre in or by ourselves. We are all half blind.
Ezra goes to his Cantos, letters to Por. I to Paris,
There to begin my 'Cedar Falls' by Wyndham Lewis.

Hugh Kenner

FACES TO THE WALL

Seventy-five years after Matthew Arnold's expansive prophecy—"More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry"—we observe, among other symptoms, a student population so illiterate it cannot read poetry at all being herded through a succession of huge anthologies scientifically designed to teach it how.

Arnold in 1880 apparently assumed (by extrapolation) that the Poetry lecture-rooms of 1955 would be crowded by undergraduates stuffed, like so many young John Stuart Mills, with serried facts (as if by expert packers in a pencil factory) and requiring only to have their emotional natures awakened and ordered. Instead we have, as every teacher knows, not merely occasional sad sacks who wonder whether Apollo is in the Bible or Shakespeare, but whole roomfuls of sophomores who can't follow Marvell's "Definition of Love" because no one present knows *what* the North Pole is[1] (except that it's a very cold place, which dosen't seem to fit). Their plight is met by survey courses which grow so bloated with department hobbies that they must occasionally be trimmed down in committee ("If we put in *Hamlet* we'll have to take out *She Stoops to Conquer.*" "Do we want *She Stoops to Conquer?*" "Well"—the 18th century specialist's jaw setting—"They ought to know about it."[2])

It is idle to pretend that a defensible idea of literary tradition or function presides over such deliberations. Mr. Eliot's classic description of the historical sense—"a feeling that the whole of

[1]Testor scriptor.
[2]Reported from western Canada.

the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order"—no longer defines something widely if obscurely felt: it is part of a controversial document useful for elucidating the work of poet Eliot, who already belongs to a vanished age. No comparable formulation today would mention Homer. Literature in English is supposed to exist on its own, and so is any particular work within it: suppositions buttressed by the Ricardian heresy that, given the appropriate techniques for deciphering, one can expect the nourishment from any poem while considering it as an isolated event, os as though it were the only poem in the world. This doctrine goes down well with undergraduates who want to read as little as possible, or who like to think of poems as tidy little patterns of imagery (like Scrabble layouts), and hence recommends itself to their teachers. Father Walter J. Ong has noted (*English Institute Essays, 1952,* p. 150) that the bulk of "mediaeval philosophy" was shallow and diagrammatic because its discussion was confined to universities where students became M.A.'s at 20, and at present, for the second time in Western history, "thought" and pedagogy are becoming one thing.

These parochial confusions have stemmed implacably from the attempt, now a half century current, to treat English vernacular poetry as a cultural norm. The extreme interest at this juncture of the Chinese Book of Odes (*The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius,* translation by Ezra Pound, Harvard, 1954) consists in the fact that these 305 lyrics do constitute a cultural norm and have been nutriment for the civilization of China for about 2500 years. Whether Arnold would have found this fact intelligible is difficult to say; he found his 'healing power" in the Grand Style—

. . . and what is else not to be overcome . . .

whereas the Odes extend from "Yaller bird, let corn alone" to ". . . ancestral manes pass . . . ." It should also be noted that though Confucius said that a man who hadn't worked on the first 25 Odes was like one who stands with his face to a wall, he never claimed that the Odes alone would guarantee civilization. He didn't invite his followers to turn to poetry to "interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us;" he said,

Aroused by the Odes;
Established by the Rites;
Brought into perfect focus by Music.

Achilles Fang writes in his Introduction to the volume, "The word *li,* essentially a code of behaviour, is generally rendered as 'rites' when the behaviour is directed toward the supernatural or the manes, and as 'etiquette' when it concerns man's relation with his fellow men . . . . Perhaps the late Ku Hung-Ming has insight when he rendered *li* as 'tact'. It could, as well, be translated 'character'." Kung leaves no place for the dilettante, nor does he try to make reading poetry a substitute for religious observance. Analogies for all these components—Odes, Rites, and Music—functioned in the West during the ascendancy of Catholic Christianity. They still exist but they don't function. Music is the property of the impresario. Poetry is what is taught in sophomore surveys. Exiguous rites are transacted inside churches; in a more comprehensive sense, the term requires a long footnote.

While the Odes were in Kung's view only part of the civilizing process, yet they aren't a miscellany of poems propped and forced into coherence by the rest of the civilized usages. The great Anthology, beginning with 15 books of Folk Songs or "lessons of the states," gathering weight and direction in the two political divisions (eight books of Elegantiae Minores and three decades of quasi-epical Greater Odes) and reaching a climax with forty Ceremonial Odes (the last five of which constitute the oldest part of the anthology), provides, coherent and free of irrelevancies,[3] a sacramental corpus on which Chinese civilization perpetually feeds. It is not, like Palgrave's Golden Treasury, a collection of miscellaneously interesting poetic documents. Apparently the translator's desire to emphasize the shape of the whole, and the way each poem's significance consists in its being part of the whole, is what has kept him from publishing bits separately in advance of the entire volume. A poem like No. 86,

So he won't talk to me when we meet?
Terrible!

[3]An editor of genius—Confucius himself, it used to be thought—seems to have selected the 305 pieces from a corpus of some 3,000.

I still can eat.
So clever he won't even come to dinner;
Well, beds are soft,
and I'm no thinner.

—doesn't, like a poem by Laforgue, imply a cycle of similar poems; it doesn't express an attitude of life, it is a posture possible to a supple sensibility, an unstudied response to the behaviour of a particular man. While the next poem is saucier—

Be kind, good sir, and I'll lift my sark
and cross the Chen to you,
But don't think you are the only sprig
in all the younger crew . . . .

—but the next transforms indurated flippancy into pathos:

A handsome lad stood in the lane,
Alas, I asked him to explain.

A rich boy came for me to the hall
and I wasn't ready. How should it befall?
Who wants a lady? . . .

A few pages away we find a different kind of experience and a different poetic language:

Dry grass, in vale:
"alas!

"I met a man, I
met
a man.

"Scorched, alas, ere it could grow."
A lonely girl pours out her woe.

"Even in water-meadow, dry."
Flow her tears abundantly.
Solitude's no remedy. (Ode 69)

—and a few pages from that, a different poignancy (since no one theme monopolizes the emotions): the plight of the Emperor's divorced mother whom decorum forbade to return to court:

Wide, ho?
A reed will cross its flow;

Sung far?
One sees it, tip-toe.

Ho strong?
The blade of a row-boat cuts it so soon.
Sung far? I could be there
(save reverence) by noon
(did I not venerate
Sung's line and state.) (Ode 61)

This isn't inflated to the dimensions of tragedy, yet the expression is perfectly adequate to the emotion. It is perhaps the absence of inflation in these poems that makes them welcome one another's company; none tries to engulf the world. It is only in the 18th century that we find European poets so sure of what, in the poem at hand, the moral theme is; the English Renaissance and Romantic writers are, in different ways, opportunists who can't be counted on not to stick in anything moving that comes to mind.[4] Yet the 18th century poet, inheritor of the scholastic discussion of moral themes, specialized his themes to the point of etiolation and then "amplified" his *language*. Racine could have turned the divorced dowager Empress's situation into a play on the conflict of Inclination and Duty, but because he would have thought it discussible in those terms it would have been, for all its brilliance, a less moving performance than the anonymous Chinese Ode.

The gnomic sentences in the Odes are equally unassuming:

My heart no turning-stone, mat to be rolled
right being right, not whim nor matter of count,
true as a tree on a mount . . . (Ode 26)

This is both explicit and comprehensive; it has the bite of great poetry; but it doesn't offer itself, like comparable bits of *The Essay on Man*

—Know then this truth (enough for Man to know)
'Virtue alone is Happiness below'—

as a picture postcard of the Universe. Neither, though it echoes Housman's tone, does this:

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[4]Cf. "He is not long soft and pathetick without some idle conceit"—Johnson on Shakespeare.

...Nor fine nor coarse cloth keep the wind
from the melancholy mind;
Only antient wisdom is
solace to man's miseries. (Ode 27)

By contrast with this tranquil decorum, Housman, when he is being sententious, implies too much: commits himself to statements about the way things are, that beg more questions than they allay, and exclude more experience than they evoke:

...Therefore, since the world has still
Much good, but much less good than ill,
And while the sun and moon endure
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
I'd face it as a wise man would,
And train for ill and not for good....
(*A Shropshire Lad,* LXII)

This is a more *provincial* utterance than the Chinese; it does not "imply a recognition of other kinds of experiences that are possible;" its Stoicism belongs to a time, not a tradition. Pound's use of Housman's idiom in the translation implies a criticism of Housman, the most interesting because the least categorical kind of criticism.

Nor is this an isolated instance of transmuted idiom. The translation is throughout a virtuoso performance of incomparable ease. Having learned, in his own phrase, to "control the procedures" of a remarkable number of poets and periods, Pound can manage the most intricate effects with the air of one improvising, or add an extra dimension to a small lyric by echoing as he rendered its plain sense the mood of some vernacular genre or the turn of phrase of some familiar English anthology piece. The use of the Miracle Play idiom in portions of Part III is the most striking instance of this technique; the élan of a chronicler whose mind is on the most important facets of his subject comes through the rhythmic primitiveness of the "Creation" Odes as it would not through a more enamelled surface:

As gourd-vines spread, man began
leaf after leaf, and no plan
overgrowing the Tsü and Ts'i,
living in caves and in stone hives.
ere ever they knew a house with eaves. (Ode 237)

The "freshness" of, say, the Towneley Shepherd's Play, its sense of contact with living beliefs, arises from a comparable directness:

> God is made youre freynd: now at this morne
>   He behestys,
> At Bedlam go se,
> Ther lygys that fre
> In a crib fulle poorely,
>   Betwyx two bestys.

More sophisticated idioms abound. The intricate Provencal and Tuscan rhymes, first put by Pound to creative use in his 1931 version of the *Donna mi priegha* and greatly elaborated in the Choruses of the 1953 *Women of Trachis,* now chime, to suggest the visual and aural interrelation of the ideograms, through Ode after Ode:

> Pine boat a-shift
> on drift of tide,
> for flame in the ear, sleep riven,
> driven; rift of the heart in dark
> no wine will clear,
> nor have I will to playe . . . . (Ode 26)

Eleven words in these six lines are coupled by rhyme or assonance, to articulate the kind of subject for which the Tuscan aesthetic of rhyme was developed. In another Ode, with a more public and general subject, the 18th century couplet

> (Another Age shall see the golden Ear
> Inbrown the Slope, and nod on the Parterre)

contributes its assurance of inclusice social order:

> Full be the year, abundant be the grain,
> high be the heaps composed in granaries,
> robust the wine for ceremonial feast
> and lack to no man be he highest or least,
> neither be fault in any rite here shown
> so plenteous nature shall inward virtue crown. (Ode 279)

Elsewhere an anxious young Emperor echoes a Shakespearean sonnet:

> Whenas my heart is filled with kings and deeds
> seeking avoid the cause of new regret . . . . (Ode 289)

the praise of an ambiguous woman begins in the cadence of later Yeats:

> Go with him for a life-long
> with high jewelled hair-do....

—but ends in an expressive blend of Elizabethan definiteness and Swinburnian facility:

> Splendor at court high guests to entertain,
> erudite silk or plain flax in the grain,
> above it all the clear spread of her brows:
> "Surely of dames this is the cynosure,
> the pride of ladies and the land's allure!"
> and yet? (Ode 47)

in a very entertaining banquet Ode the metre of *L'Allegro,* flavored with Uncle Remus, commits itself to quite un-Miltonic indecorum—

> Guests start eatin', mild and even,
> The sober sit an' keep behavin,'
> but say they've booz'd then they do not.
> When they've booz'd they start a-wavin' an' a-ravin',
> Yas' sir they rise up from the ground
> and start dancin' an' staggerin' round

—but suddenly returns to its Miltonic keynote with a perfect 17th century line:

> each to his own wild fairy fancy.... (Ode 220)

The more we explore the *Classic Anthology* the more such echoes we find; but it is always the "procedures," never the personal features of an older poet's style that Pound imitates. This is strength, not weakness; the trick of personality (a poetic impurity) is much easier to catch. The version of the 58th Ode owes a great deal to the Browning of *Men and Women* without incorporating a single one of his mannerisms.

There is reason in these echoings; Pound's book is in part meant as a compendium of English poetic procedures, set in order, all put to work expressing not a chaos of preoccupations but something coherent. The various themes, devices and tones of English verse are the accents of successive phases of a civilization, but the elements of a *paideuma* don't reside in them. Nothing comparable

to the *Shi King,* no such compendium of sustenance as Arnold half-implies, can be assembled out of existing English poetry, for all its range, for all its magnificence, for all the genius that has gone into its composition. Its history since Chaucer's time—Chaucer is the last thoroughly civilized English writer—is a history of mobilized doctrines and counter-obsessions, of foreign injections, chiefly French and Italian, of dubious systems and astonishing random talents, all constituting a cultural chronicle but not a cultural *norm.* Arnold's claims for poetry may have been badly expressed, but it wasn't, at least, on behalf of vernacular poetry that he made them. He saw English vernacular poetry as part of an order founded on Homer, Virgil, Sophocles, Dante: on the classics that do constitute a norm for the Western spirit. Pound's list in *How to Read* may be regarded, in this light, as his attempt to do for Western culture what Confucius or whoever selected the 305 Odes did for Chinese: nominate the contents of what W. B. Yeats used to call "a new sacred book of the arts": the things one must know to be fully human in a western context (understanding by "know," 'incorporate into oneself.")

It is arguable, then, that however hard he works on 25 English poems or 250, the "English" specialist must stand, in Confucius' phrase, with his face to a wall. His circumvallation, an 80 years' labour of pedagogic expediency, is now nearly complete. Arnold wasn't a professor of English, he was a professor of Poetry; he lectured on translating Homer. It was after his time that "English Departments" began to appear, charged with disseminating works so miscellaneous Parkman's *Oregon Trail,* Shakespeare's *Othello,* and Cardinal Newman's *Apologia,* plus Dante, the Bible, and Greek Mythology, not to mention Critical Method and How to Use the Library. For such responsibilities the English Professor of Raleigh's or Quiller-Couch's generation was, not surprisingly, unprepared. He was accustomed to getting his disciplines from what he remembered of the classics, and treating the English writers (i.e. the poets; prose seemed more serious) as diversions. ("If I am accused on Judgment Day of teaching literature," wrote Raleigh, 'I shall plead that I never believed in it and that I maintained a wife and children.") Hence the habit described by Dr.

Leavis, of treating English literature "in terms of Hamlet's and Lamb's personalities, Milton's universe, Johnson's conversation, Wordsworth's philosophy, and Othello's or Shelley's private life": neither a subject nor a discipline nor a *paideuma*, but a collection of hobbies. Hence also the adoption of historical and philological method from the German universities; the professor who introduced into the poetry seminar the stooped shoulder and the 3x5 card didn't modify his conviction that English poetry is essentially frivolous; all he wanted was a procedure for dealing with it that would give his students something rigorous to do and be graded on. The New Criticism—in practice a new pedagogy—was yet a third strategy for milking carrots. Its valuable initial polemics against "Q" 's eclecticism and the graduate school's *Wissenschaft* having consumed the available fuel, its American exponents have been spending the past five years arranging the terms of a truce with the MLA, while in England Dr. Leavis, the attempt to erect a scheme of values from the close study of English literature alone having led insensibly to the piecing together of a tradition uniting chiefly those writers who had no foreign entanglements to speak of, trickled off into a series of desultory articles on D. H. Lawrence and finally shut down his review.

The New Critics descerned that lterature was being taught, at the time they arrived on the scene, as a species of history. This is a simple corollary of the fact that an anthology of English poetry is, when comprehensive, a history of taste, not a thesaurus of values that would interest an Italian or a Chinaman. When stingent, is it—like Pound's *ABC of Reading*—largely a succession of fine performances in a succession of modes or implying a succession of norms not native to the English temperament but imported from France, from Italy, or direct from the constantly rediscovered classics. No other kinds of anthology are possible, using strictly English materials. The kind used to teach poetry courses[5] result from an attempt not to compile the historical kind while ignoring the fact that the other kind implies background wrok that is pedagogically embarrassing; one can't keep telling innocent freshmen that they should have read Catullus in high school, and one's

[5]See "Subways to Parnassus" in the April 1954 *Poetry*.

college, as likely as not, has no classic department. Hence the recourse to methodology; hence also the tendency, as time passes, to allow the undoubted benefit that the least knowing students can get from studying a few poems carefully to pass itself off as the whole of what literature has to offer.

So *The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius* is unique in English not only as a piece of resourceful translating, but also with respect to the kind of book Pound has translated (and insisted on publishing *in toto),* a kind otherwise impossible in English: a block of lyric material all ventilated, coherent, implying a full set of civilized values. The constant echoing of existing modes implies not only the variousness of the original but a criticism, an attempted ordering of the resources of English poetry, deliberately undertaken by a specialist of genius whose mind has been occupied with the uses and implications of available idioms for forty-five years. Most of the time it is the interest of the Chinese original that predominates, its wisdom and its strangeness; but and over and over we are made aware of Pound's judgment on some nuance or other of the native tradition: here is where this would fit in, here is how a full scale of values would use it.

Poem 58, for instance, opense a folk-song:

> Hill-billy, hill-billy, come to buy
> silk in our market, apparently?
> toting an armful of calico.

A few lines later, however, we are apprised that the convention of the Browning monologue is governing the whole poem; with an effect reminiscent of Browning's slang minus Browning's personality, the lilt modulates into colloquial modernity—

> . . . and then I asked for a notary.
> I said: It's O.K. with me,
> we could be spliced autumnally,
> be not offended.

"Be not offended" complicates the sensibility behind the poem; this woman was never cheap and is not now hard: she remains in adversity the shiftless pedlar's sworn wife. The pathos of the next lines is too economical to be Browning's:

> Autumn came, was waiting ended?

I climbed the ruin'd wall, looked toward Kuan pass.
On the Kuan frontier no man was.
I wept until you came,
trusted your smiling talk. One would.
You said the shells were good and the stalks all clear.
You got a cart
and carted off me and my gear.

At this point an Elizabethan pastiche intervenes as lyric intelude—

Let does eat no more mulberries
While yet the leaves be green....

—its clear melody not tied to the song-books but weighted, like a song of Ophelia's, by the specific situation from which it arises and to which it leads us back:

The mulberry tree is bare,
yellow leaves float down thru the air,
Three years we were poor,
now Ki's like a soup of mud,
the carriage curtains wet, I even straight
and you ambiguius
with never a grip between your word and act.

Midway through the final sixteen lines we come across a cunning acknowledgement to Browning—

"Grow old with you," whom old you spite....

—which is at once a note of homage, an intensification by contact ("Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be!"[6]), and a perfectly natural phrase whether one thinks of Browning or not. By the close of the poem we are aware that this tour-de-force, making use of at least three indentifiable English traditions to articulate a subject handled by none of them, has been fitted into a moral context determined by adjacent poems in the anthology: much of what is valuable in Browning, for instance, salvaged from his 19th century optimistic protestantism.

A few poems from Pound's version of the Classic Anthology will no doubt in time find their way into English Anthologies, or turn up on the American Lit. survey curricula; one hopes this won't have taken place before the import of the book as a whole has been

[6]Rabbi ben Ezra!

absorbed, showing what an autonomous vernacular literary tradition (if any Western language could have one) would look like, and how unfocussed, for the lack of one, are interests confined to vernacular poetry. In an ideal world the effect of the Classic Anthology would be to send readers—and educators—back to the occidental classics.

Alan Neame

The Islamic Picnic

I.

AGAINST a backcloth of Islamic loves
the spectral Englishwoman moves
little ah little enough she loves
and less than little she approves

OVER the poppies and among the groves
cold airs attend the spectre as she moves
sprinkling a grey dust on the unleavened loaves
spilling the sherbert down the pitcher grooves

DUST on the sherbert DUST on the food
DUST on the dumbuk DUST on the oude
DUST on the carpets and the couples part
DUST in the flesh and DUST about the heart

THE cartwheel hat the laquered lips
deceiving none not self-deceiving
the boardwise bust the hammer-hips
and all her straps and kirby-grips
boast of her unloving living;
FORTY-eight winters on her head
past laughing loving or reprieving
she marches with determined tread
to join the rearguard of the dead—
pass one!—and litle grieving.

II.

O Mohàmmed sing a qasìda
drive the death's-head away
Nàhida take up your lute
tune the string to your finger
and play

THEY PLAY AND SING TOGETER:

Lie in eachother's arms who lies
know no night as dark
as the darkness of closed eyes

Locked in eachother's arms who lies
knows no noon as bright
or sunburst brighter than this

O Mohàmmed sing a qasìda
drive the death's-head away
Khàlida take up your flute
play as loud as the singer
but play

WHO against absence of love
sang the love in all living
love in which all things move
beyond proof or reproof
beyond loss or forgiving
engulfing the deep
out-leaping the mountain
informing all creatures
past count or recounting
that bridles the stars
that unleashes the comet
that detonates wars
SING that love O Mahommet.

III.

BUT what does *she* know of rapturous trances,
mystical marriages, langours & lances;
or has she perceived that essential equation
linking virginity & penetration;
can she distinguish the rapture from rapture
of capture, escape, flight, pursuit & recapture;
& what of the Dark Night, & what of the glories,

and what of the Fornax Divini Amoris;
borne up through heavens of roses & thunder
mad with agony & drunk with wonder;
ravished by seraphs & bare-bottomed boys
through pangs beyond pain into joy beyond joys;
borne to her Lover, ecstatic & fainting,
writhing, resisting, quivering & panting;
stunned by the cataract transcending all words
of wild oratorios from man-headed birds;
wafted from Paradise, shuddering & naked,
bleeding, vetiginous, frantic, unsated;
skull, lily, trumpet, feather & rod,
has she had these favours of her Lover-God?

IS YOUR heart one blazing wound, O Lady?
    Lady, are you in Heaven already?
    Have you tasted higher bliss
    That you coldly censure this?
    Grey as ash & cold as clay
    Cankerous on the buds of May?
    —Dead to us?—Our worlds converge,
    Lightly touch, but never merge,
    Never mingle heart and heart
    Worlds of ice and fire apart.
    Lady, from the windy hill
    Of virtue censure as you will,
you will,

    Poppies will be scarlet-stained
    Lovers just as unrestrained
    And our joys no jot decreased...
    Until a darkness downs the feast...
    What will be will, as sure as must be must...
    And you and we at last in lasting trust
    and charity compound our mutual dust;
WHAT is to be will be, what must be must.

IV.

SWIFTLY the spectre fades
the bright and bannered colours
scarlet and blues and yellows
grow brighter than before
while through the untroubled valleys
to the rippling guitar
rises the young man's voice:
his words are:
—Love will restore
what no-love else destroys...

Der von Kurenberg

Ich Zoch Mir Einen Valken

(Der von Kurenberg is thought to have lived during the second half of the twelfth century in the Bavarian-Austrian region, but no definite facts are known about his life.)

Ich zoch mir einen valken mêre danne ein jâr
dô ich in gezamete als ich in wolte hân
und ich im sîn gevidere mit golde wol bewant,
er huop sich ûf vil hôhe un fluog in anderiu lant.

Sit sach ich den valken schône fliegen;
er fuorte an sînem fuoze sîdîne riemen,
und was in sîn gevidere alrôt guldîn.
got sende si zesamene die gerne geliep wellen sîn!

Raised I a Falcon

Raised I a falcon longer than a year
and though I tamed him to obedience
drest him in riband golde
hied he him off
to another land.

And him, soaring skywards, saw I,
my silken trappings
flapping at his feet,
his feathers gleaming golde, crimson.
whoso love seeketh may god maketh meet!

(*Translated by* EVA HESSE)

Miltos Sahtouris

Miltos Sahtouris was born on the island of Hydra in 1919, a direct descendent of Admiral George Sahtouris, naval hero of the Greek War of Independence. In his early youth he lived in Salonika and Nauplion, studied four years of law at the University of Athens, and is now living in Athens. Though he began as a surrealist, and still writes some orthodox surrealist poetry, Sahtouris is trying to create a more personal idiom based on a clearer lyrical line. When asked to make a statement about his poetry, he wrote: "Poetry (without my being aware of it) was like a mirror of inner self, and behold, I beheld in my hand another mirror in which was reflected everything I saw. I shattered both mirrors to pieces, and from the fragments I built my own Orpheus-Mirror, in which true poetry now stands reflected, my own life."

Translations by KIMON FRAIR

Death

No one killed this particular man
he was not the harbor-master
he was not a warrior in battle
in trains he would transport animals in iron cages
and his heart nested on the high mountains
at some time his blood will speak
and then shall dark black birds smother the clouds
bearded black winds shall encircle the fields
pear trees shall sing his history
in the house of flame with the wild animals
the cups of death upon the table
the sunless curtains the flint the cold words
flint and cold kisses without love
with the lewd girls of silence
who every evening would close the windows
who every evening would crucify sleep
who every evening would tear up and eat their dresses
they would fall on their backs and spit on their dreams

Beauty

he diffuses ugliness with beauty
he took a guitar
he went along a river
singing

he lost his voice
the delerious lady stole it
who cut off her head amidst the crimson waters
and the poor man no longer has a voice with which to sing
and the river rolls
the tranquil head with its closed eyelashes

singing

The Three Lovers

On the rain-soaked roads of evening
breathes a sea-blue light;
a broad hand on each heart
and with ruinous footsteps
three lovers hand in hand go by
the first

hung his love on a tree
and prays beneath the tree at midnight
for his love to descend clinging to the leaves
for the melting flood of leaves to cease
a dog drinks up his tears on the ground
and love amidst the branches stones him
the tree roars the wind the dog
the second

gave his love away to a crazy violinist
the crazy man composed a song about it
the sky rains down flowers coins
the roads resounds with the fatal violin
all have now learned the song of love
with pale and puckered lips they whistle it
only he does not know it
the third

made a boat out of his love
and launched it upon the three seas
he has become a boy again
and builds castles of sand
he gathers shells pebbles
and waits for his boat for love
to return again

All of them have carved a tree on their hearts
a violin played close to the ear will drive them crazy
and in the underseas the captain plays with coral

Audrey McGaffin

A Matter of Perspective

Terre Haute

Only yesterday we crossed high lands, sharp ridges
That thrust skyward thinly like bridges
Over far-below valleys, heart skidding on slick
Tracks of a blizzard down mile-like inches, stopped in the nick,
To leap with fear back to the throat . . . until
At length we dropped onto the snowless plain.
And now no hill
In today's quick wagon month of miles. One day! How leveled
the pioneer memory of height, having traveled
This far, dull after dull after dull with a day's ending
In view at beginning; how steep the merest rise to bending
Backs against wheels bogged at its base . . .
that now the name,
High Land, given to this slight lift above the plain,
Seems not as much a paradox as we
Whose swift transition, illusive, has gulled us of degree.

Marvin Solomon

The Hundred Geese

Kung-fu-tse was not the only one
Who said it, but he said it well;
That peace without, is peace within:
Peace within the world is in the land
Is in the town is in the neighborhood
Is in the family is in the individual.
Looming in giant Buddha-brood,
Pervading ginger mist, he unfolds his bland,

Impractical lotuses. Ma Fen,
An artist, said it too. A hundred
(Count them) migrant geese, half hidden,
Fly effortlessly from right to left across
An ivory sky, earlier in spring
Than morning. Ma Fen said
It is a subtle hundred, saying
In Chinese character: aromatic joss

Of dawn, deep almond valley,
Frogs asleep in rice,
Silent lake of no reflection, three
Willow staks and wing-wind.
One turns to something noticed:
How six maneuver—first with eyes,
Then neck—a perfect arc; how mist
Partially obscures the one about to land,

The one that rises from a light repast
Of shoots and salamanders. No
Goose is motionless. With unerring taste,
Lovingly, Ma Fen restates
The principles of flight, the bones

Like feathers, feathers like spring snow.
How like the finger signs
Of mutes, their rapid alphabets

Express profound displacement–strength of mind
Over pliant matter in eleven
Hundred A.D. Here is found
The simplicity of complete detachment;
In which one hundred ecstatic geese
Fly straight off to heaven,
With hardly a ripple on the silken surface
Of the small relinquished firmament.

BOOK REVIEWS

POEMS: A SELECTION. By *Leonie Adams.* Funk and Wagnalls.

It's a long time since I so much enjoyed reading a book of poems. So much? Well, no; but so intensely. Intensity, heady and overpowering, is the privilege of the exquisite decadent. Allen Tate, however, appears on the dustjacket, declaring, "More than anyone else today she continues at the highest level the great lyrical tradition of the English Romantics, with whom in their own time she would have held her own." It is the sort of thing that one hears said, nowadays, mostly about poets a great deal less good than this one. It is true to the extent that this poet still sits watching those last Keatsian oozings "hour by hour." And the juice drips out, right enough, and spreads its own strong sickly-sweet aroma. But what a cumbrous quaint old cider-press we need, still to get juice from these ancient apples! It is this, the elaborate heavy contrivance, that stamps these poems, for all their prevailingly pastoral air, their finding of reasons for seasons, as decadent. These poems, that recall the Romantics, could not have been written "in their own time," but only years afterwards, at the very end of the tradition.

Once, not so long ago, casting my eye down the first page and finding "else-wending," "goldening day," "cold, wizening, drear," "still a time gambolling," I would have given these poems very short shrift. But since then, in the light of such different poems as Hardy's, Hopkins's, Pound's Cavalcanti translations, we have learnt to be more indulgent towards elaborate, archaic, highly literary diction. Moreover, Lèonie Adams uses this diction so persistently (with, for instance, none of those crabbed colloquialisms that strike through Hardy's verse at even its most poetical), that it is plain we have here no accident or naive license but a planned perversity. If this poet chooses to drive her diction as far as possible from the usages of speech or of prose, she knows what she is doing and does it on purpose. All the same, perversity is the word; and Pound's warning to poets that they have to compete with the prose of Stendhal and Flaubert—this holds good. Any poet who chooses

to ignore it must take the consequences—of which the most likely is that he can't hope for more than a minor achievement. And sure enough "exquisite" is a word that goes well with "minor."

What we have here is a selection from two earlier volumes, "Those Nöt Elect (1925) and "High Falcon" (1929), together with a score or more poems written since. These later poems give the game away, for here the elaborate diction is combined with an equally elaborate and consistently ambiguous syntax, to produce an all but impenetrable obscurity. Syntax and diction alike are as indiosyncratic as in Hopkins, without having the guide-line to meaning that is found in his heavily marked rhythms. There are plenty of opaque felicities, however, and some of the poems, such as "The People in the Park," will obviously, as they say, "repay further study." The best of this later group, by virtue of its singularly lively and flexible movement, is the first poem in the book, "Words for the Raker of Leaves." Here indeed the rhythms have a quality of Poundian "cut" that stands out all the more because the same quality is so conspicuously lacking to the diction. For that is what is wrong with it—not just that it is archaic, literary, but that it is excessively upholstered, Petrarchan, running to fat. And to take it on those terms we have to admit, as Pound does with Petrarch and Alexander Boyd, that it is capable of its own florid beauties.

Some of the older poems are written in rhyming quatrains or other short stanzas; here the rhythms are often uninteresting, and the verse becomes merely flatulent and "Georgian," rounding out and clipping home too neatly. Sonnets, on the other hand (notably "A Gull Goes Up," the three sonnets of "Discourse with the Heart," and an exquisite piece among the later poems, "Alas, Kind Element!") work towards or in terms of a conceit, and profit from the wit thus manifest. The best of all are "Country Summer," where the diction is relatively chaste, and "Winter Solstice," of which I quote the second half:

> The sun declines in pride,
> The year draws underground,
> With much beside;
> And flesh which has survived,
> Outlived its times' defeat,

Rides now the skeleton,
Secure by what is gone,
To taste a pious meat.
How should that other praise,
Whose loss will not corrupt,
The triumph of its days?
Why this - that had
Not more than breath in mind -
The mortal, feasts unblanched
Among a dying kind.
Then, spirit, if you must
Give a more lasting forfeit than a dust
Which owes but to the West,
Reflect, a more entire estate
Is of such charge possessed,
And lordly calendars its progress show;
For that sun's course which measured the extent
Of so much treasurable worth
Saw your goods tried, not spent.
You scorned to hold of time, and so
Get not time's rate,
But sign alone
The payment without date.
Its little tithe has cost the dust as dear,
That, ringed with death,
Makes its own mock in this late wreath,
A twelvemonth green, and in the binding sere.

The conceits here, of riding the skeleton, and holding a lease of time, are in one way all the more engaging for being so heavily varnished; yet it cannot be denied that they would show up more clearly if the diction were less literary. A rare feature is the terse prosaic distinction—"Saw your goods tried, not spent"—which here clinches the argument just where that was needed. Being so far from prose usage, the diction will not in general lend itself to this sort of thing, and is all the poorer for it. One feels the lack of it, for instance, in the second sentence—"Who should that other praise . . ."—which I have tugged about this way and that, trying in vain to decide upon its grammar and its sense.

The work of Léonie Adams is quite unknown over here in Britain, and I hope this volume will find a British publisher. It will recommend itself to our literary reactionaries, and it will be

a bad model for any young poet to follow; but it has an eccentric distinction that ought to be acknowledged.

DONALD DAVIE

THE GOLDEN ECHO, an Intimate Autobiography and the Portrait of a Literary Generation. By *David Garnett.* Harcourt, Brace. 1954.

Of several dreadful worlds available to the inspection of memoir-readers, one would perhaps least want to inhabit the one Mr. Garnett grew up in, though being its creature he recalls it with studied garrulity. Though the woods were full of visiting eccentrics—literally, the woods: The Garnetts lived in a house "half a mile away from any highroad, approachable only by a rough cart-track through a lonely waste of woodland"—social existence seems to have possessed no flavor, and while the object of such money as was to be found was "to enable you to do the things you really wanted to do," you evidently didn't want to do anything of much importance, because there was no milieu in which action had any function:

> One night [in 1911] the devil of jealous love drove me out onto Hampstead Heath. It was bitterly cold, and I rushed up and down blindly to keep warm. Next morning I suddenly said to Constance [his mother]: "I want to go to Moscow, to see Ursula."
>
> "Certainly, you could go out at Easter," said Constance, as though it were the most natural thing in the world. She would be able to find the money somehow . . . .

This is a way of living emphatic but curiously devoid of style, like the prose of H. G. Wells: untrammelled but without inclusiveness, unmindful of Edwardian convention but hypnotized by the rhythm of its own genteel iconoclasm. Constance Garnett translated the Russian novelists; it is difficult to say why, except that no one else seemed to be doing it and the conversation of political exiles was helping to determine liberalism's newest climate. Edward Garnett, the celebrated publisher's reader, had for occupation "the discovery of talent in unknown writers. But when one of his discoveries achieved success Edward sometimes lost in-

terest in his work. He definitely preferred the ugly duckling to the swan."

That graceless "definitely" is as characteristic of Mr. David Garnett's prose as the blankness of the whole remark is of his book. Considered as reading-matter, *The Golden Echo* (volume one of a longer autobiography) is easily placed: it has two interesting stretches of any length, twenty pages on a visit to Russia in 1904, fifteen pages on the author's romantically comic attempt to engineer a jail-break for a Hindu political prisoner. The rest is chiefly name-dropping (in countless little paragraphs that come to nothing), celebration of such matters as the savage beauty of Sydney Oliver's daughters ("How Brynhild's eyes used to flash and sparkle in the firelight! How lovely and romantic Daphne looked with her dark hair softly tumbling over her snow-leopard fur!"), and notes on encounters with a miscellany of figures—Lawrence, Rupert Brooke, Geoffrey Keynes,[1] W. H. Hudson, John Galsworthy—who acquire no more significance, beyond the autor's inert assumption that we are impressed by them already, than, say, the Commissioner of Oaths who made arrow-heads "indistinguishable from the finest products of the late Stone Age" and collected "mummified hands from Egypt, shrunken heads from the head-hunters, jewels, swordsticks, old telescopes, things made of mutton-bones by Napoleon's prisoners," because, one suspects, for the author they really have none, except that more people have heard of them and so their acquaintance possesses currency-value.

Ford Madox Hueffer's apparently hasn't: "He later adopted the name of Ford Madox Ford, and some people regard him as a great novelist." Of Ford's remarkable editorial achievement with the *English Review,* one of the few events of any importance touched on by the book, we are told only,

> Not long after this episode, Ford realized one of his ambitions and became the editor of a great literary monthly, which could bear comparison with anything of the kind which had ever existed in our history. The first number of the *English Review* appeared in December, 1908, and its contributors

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>
> For a year or two Ford was to become an outstanding figure of literary London: he was arrayed in a magnificent fur coat;—wore a glossy topper; drove about in hired carriages; and his fresh features, the color of raw veal, his prominent blue eyes and rabbit teeth smiled benevolently and patronizingly upon all gatherings of literary lions.... It was Ford's greatest period, when he could get hold of anybody.

Arnold Bennett's journals are less crass. Granting the accuracy of these facts, the implicit reduction of so distinguished a manifestation of editorial intelligence to ambition, social opportunism and a blob of names is enough to suggest the level of utter triviality to which all experience is reduced in its passage through Mr. Garnett's processing room. Ford rather irritated him, other people (such as Rupert Brooke—before, it is true, he was "spoilt by success and by certain idées fixés which later came to resemble hallucinations") were agreeable; but such empathic valuations operate in bland innocence of the fact that Ford was vastly more intelligent than Brooke or the Keynses and had more to offer to a curiosity that could get beyond marvelling at his ability to "twitch one ear without moving the other—a dreadful and fascinating accomplishment"—a kind of curiosity, in short, whose functions Mr. Garnett, in the interests of a misconceived sceptical integrity, appears to have resolutely atrophied. Some people have been heard of, some haven't; some were called geniuses, some weren't; each as he takes his place in the narrative is determined by his reference-book adjectives—Belloc had "great energy and determined character," the economist Hobson "a brilliantly original mind," Geoffrey Keynes was "eager, lean and in a hurry;" all Mr. Garnett's experience exists on the same level and it all happened to Mr. Garnett; he can describe how Francis Birrell trod on his toe at a dance, what he ate during Examination Week in July 1911, and how he once snubbed Gaudier-Brzeska, in exactly the same space and with exactly the same tone—probably the achievement that caused *John O'London's Weekly,* reviewing the present book, to call him "a master of English prose;" he has the commonplace mind of a successful middlebrow novelist.

HUGH KENNER

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HUGH KENNER

INDIVIDUALISM RECONSIDERED, by *David Riesman*. The Free Press, 1954.

"Intellectuals," says David Riesman, "try to cope with their anxiety by telling each other atrocity stories about America." This epigram serves as well as any other to indicate the qualities that characterize Riesman as a critic: his interest in American culture, his shrewd insight and his arresting way with words, and his willingness to generalize.

After his *The Lonely Crowd* had become a best-seller, he was persuaded to collect thirty of his essays, written over a period of seven years, in a single volume. It is given the name of one of his most perceptive essays, *Individualism Reconsidered.* The title is satisfactory, for individualism is one of Riesman's main concerns; but this is only one of seven major topics treated here. The other six deal with minorities, culture (popular and unpopular), Veblen and our business culture, Freud, totalitarianism, and problems of method in the social sciences.

Riesman's views on individualism are appealing in their gay freshness and their hard common-sense. He insists that no ideology can justify the sacrifice of an individual to the needs of the group; that each of us should accept his differences from others and his similarities to them, without any artificial forcing of identity; that "adjustment" is a sad fate for a child, and "integration" of personality a dubious ideal; that we should be grateful for inconsistency in our culture and even in our philosophers; that we should "defend our right to be anxious, our right to be tense, our right to aspirin and to our allergies."

As in *The Lonely Crowd,* he sees our culture pushing us away from "inner-direction," with its gyroscope holding us in the course set by our parents, and toward "other-direction," with a radar making us sensitive to our peers and their opinion of us. His ideal is "automony"the courage to believe in one's own values, to accept differences as delightful rather than as a source of anxiety. (One of his few verbal infelicities is his phrase used to describe this courage. He speaks of "the nerve of failure," which is that nerve required "to face aloneness and the possibility of defeat in one's personal life or one's work without being morally destroyed.

It is . . . simply the nerve to be oneself when that self is not approved of by the dominant ethic of a society.")

In amplifying his views on individualism, he reveals his darting mind and ranging interests. He pays his readers the compliment of assuming that they are as literate as he, and that nothing human is alien to the educated person. What other social scientist would, in formal essays, discuss Kafka, football, Henry James, the Adamses, Melville, Dostoievsky, movies, Durkheim, the New Critics, architecture, Richard Wright, Brandeis, *The Road to Xanadu,* and the habits of law-review editors? Wit informs his wisdom, so that one is tempted to quote his apothegms. For example: "As hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue, so ideology pays tribute to utopian thought." "The morally indignant person is often a sadist whose own impulses were his first victims." "Some intellectuals have an obsessive feeling that disorder in itself is a terrible thing." Riesman sums up his own attitude by saying that he feels "a certain looseness and disorderliness and variety of attitude are a part of the good life. One might ask, why do I have to take my stand on every issue? Why need I be all of a piece?"

It is startling in this age to be confronted with a critic who is reassuring, confident, even optimistic. We Americans are, he says, less rigid, more agreeable, more cooperative and conciliatory than our ancestors. Our culture, for all its injustices, is singularly tolerant: "We Americans like big talk, and much that passes for anti-Semitic expression is big talk, with no thought or dream behind it of real action." Let's not worry so much about McCarthy; and let's not, as members of minority groups (he cites intellectuals, Jews, and members of the upper class), assume that powerlessness is necessarily synonymous with ethical superiority. He even has a good word to say for apathy: politically it is a safeguard against regimentation; in totalitarian countries it is a mode of fighting against oppression; at home it may even be one form of the battle between older and younger generations.

Riesman's diverse background helps explain his range. He studied bio-chemistry at Harvard, became law clerk to Brandeis after graduation from law school, taught law at four universities,

and is now a sociologist. His essay on "Football in America: a study in cultural diffusion," is delightful as history, random information, sober anthropology. In the essays on Veblen he points out that conspicuous consumption has greatly declined, while conspicuous production has become characteristic; and he notes that we are now engaged in an efffor "to find a moral equivalent for capitalism." His re-reading of Freud is particularly trenchant: Freud's limitations are analyzed in detail, after a statement that "no one else has contributed so much to the vitality of the social sciences today." His deft satire, "The Nylon War," imagines that by bombarding the Russians with the surplus products of our free-enterprise system—lipsticks, radios, washing-machines, and the rest—we completely confound their culture and their economy. In several of the more specialized essays there is illumination for lawyers, economists, and sociologists.

Here, then, is God's plenty. How valid are his ideas? The question really means, to what extent does the reader agree with him?

I find myself wholly in agreement with his praise of individualism and "autonomy," and yet feel that he (unintentionally?) makes the individual an inevitable antagonist of the group. In my opinion, happiness and self-fulfillment comes only by the whole-hearted participation in group life, when the individual gives his best to the group. Riesman implies a position that could be wholly self-centered; yet he has undoubtedly enjoyed his own fellowship in groups, and I assume that his attack upon "groupism" is actually his protest against supine "other-directedness."

Again, in his sane plea for perspective about totalitarianism (he says, for example, that our domestic Communists are the real dupes), he makes one feel that we should take lightly the activities of our American reactionaries. Here, too, we may be concerned only with emphasis; but I feel that we should always be disturbed by efforts to curb our liberties, and should always call attention to attacks upon our traditional freedoms.

There is a certain imprecision—always a danger when a brilliant mind plays over the subject of culture—in some of his ideas. It strikes me as glib to agree with Peter Viereck's statement that "anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of the intellectuals," and to

say that penance destroys "the last vestige of aloneness." Nor do I agree with all his judgments on Freud, on the methods of social science, on the law.

Riesman's essays, for all these minor criticisms, are refreshing and wise. He is a rarity: a social scientist who can write well, who is concerned with values, who is interested in the forest of culture and not merely in the statistical trees, who is at home with literature, philosophy, and history. He is a sociologist and a humanist.

JAMES G. LEYBURN

THE WIDOWS OF THORNTON. By *Peter Taylor.* Harcourt, Brace. 1954

JORDAN COUNTY. By *Shelby Foote.* The Dial Press. 1954.

Each of these collections aims at unity by imposing a unity of place: Mr. Taylor's stories are about women, and their men, in and from the town of Thornton, Tennessee; Mr. Foote's constitute an impressionistic history, moving in reverse and accumulated through a variety of representative lives, of a single county in Mississippi from the present to the last days of the Spanish occupation. Each also attempts a thematic unity: the most resonant and climactic words in both books is "loneliness;" the fact of loss and loneliness prevails, and there are no relationships that beat it back for long.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Foote are both Southern writers, and they find their theme, as well as their subject, in what will have to be called once more, by an unhappy and skeptical Northerner, the legend of the South. "For one thing," writes Mr. Foote most explicitly, in the course of his longest and most relentlessly depressing story, "there had been a war and a way of life that was lost when the war was lost." It is of course irrelevant, for the purposes of art, whether this "way of life" is history or a nostalgic construction; the life must be specifically created, or recreated, by the author before we credit it. The recent vogue of Southern writers is doubtless due, in part at least, to the disenchantment of the Northern intellectual—who after all is the typical reader and

critic in America—with the aridities of economic and political theory (and practice), and to his consequent wistful interest in any possible indigenous American culture, preferably a dead one. Such an atmosphere is unpromising not only for the critic but for the writer, and a kind of charlatanry may succeed in attracting attention simply because it decks itself in local color and speaks from time to time with a vapidly elegiac portentousness—as Mr. Foote unfortunately does in the sentence quoted—about remote and unsubstantiated good old days.

Actually, Mr. Foote is much less the offender, in this respect, than Mr. Taylor. *The Widows of Thornton*—without ever bothering to specify the old ways—spins out a pointless, unparticularized (or pointlessly particularized) bogus-elegiac mood of fatigue and disquiet, which depends for its kick on the reader's faith in the vital solidity of a past never demonstrated. Mr. Taylor's collection is in fact Southern only in locale: the people talked about and talking turn out to be, most of them, exactly like the Connecticut week-enders whose unascertainable acedias flow weekly, through a dead-pan recitation of detail that must be important because there is so much of it, into the perplexed, respectful minds of subscribers moving on reluctantly from the cartoon, boner-items, bra-ads, and other points of interest in the *New Yorker*.

Some day a sternly impartial critic will have his say about the withering imprint of some sort of New-Yorkerese (not the "controlled" whimsy about maiden aunts in St. Louis, which luckily has had no effect on anybody except the editors) on a great many competent writers of short fiction during the middle decades of the twentieth century: the hair-raisingly casual monotone of imminent desperation (always implying that station-wagons are no guarantee of happiness); the startling *aperçu* that since everybody has problems all problems are alike and everybody is like everybody else, lonely or something, and since everybody is lonely there is not much point in making clear the reasons for the mess so let's all wallow in it; above all, the stiff-upper-lipped constipation of the style—reaching its summit of self-parody in that *New-Yorker* TV-mystery, Jack Webb's *Dragnet*—in which every detail is as important as every other because, finally, none has any im-

portance at all. Meanwhile, until this job of literary sanitation has been accomplished, we will have to content ourselves with assaying individual samples whenever they seek a wider audience: Mr. Taylor's collecton, for one, which is made up—with a single exception—of technical and psychological shortcuts in the *New Yorker* manner (the playlet, "The Death of a Kinsman," with dialogue like cotton wadding, and the longest story, "The Dark Walk," are the only ones not published originally in the *New Yorker*, and they are worst and most mannered of all: proof of the spread and virulence of the infection).

The exception is "Bad Dreams": a young Negro couple, intending to frighten off an old Negro tramp with whom their employer has obliged them to share their garage-loft rooms, feel morally obliged—with the special bitterness that comes of self-betrayal by one's own humane impulses—to accept him because, in the course of "saving" their infant from a nightmare, he obliges them to regard him as a vulnerable human being. It is the only story in which Mr. Taylor fixes his theme of loneliness at the center of a complexly realized situation, and is even able, ultimately, to move off and examine it alone:

> And while Bert lay there carefully not thinking of his bad dream and not thinking of the old man, and while Emmaline thought of the old man and wept bitterly because of him, wasn't it likely that the old man himself was still awake—in the dark room with the three-legged chest of drawers, the unplastered walls, and the old harness hooks? If so, was it possible that he, too, had been awakened from a bad dream tonight? Who would ever know? Bert and Emmaline would tell each other in the morning about their dreams—their loneliness was only of the moment—and when Baby grew up, they would tell her about themselves and about their bad dreams. But who was there to know about *his?* Who is there that can imagine the things that such a dirty, ignorant, old tramp of a Negro thinks about when he is alone at night, or dreams about while he sleeps? Such pathetic old tramps seem, somehow, to have moved beyond the reach of human imagination. They are too unlike us, in their loneliness and ignorance and age and dirt, for us even to guess about them as people. It may be necessary for us, when we meet them in life or when we encounter them in a story, to treat them not as people but as symbols of something we like or dislike.

But Mr. Taylor's other pieces are set in a pasteboard landscape, cluttered by pat symbolisms as when, in "The Dark Walk," getting rid of old furniture equals liberation—

> There must be nothing anywhere in the apartment to diminish the effect of newness and brightness or to remind her of the necessity there had been to dispense with all that was old and useless and inherited.

or heaving with clumsy ironies, as in "Their Losses," when the only "widow" of Thornton with a husband, riding into Memphis to meet him, says to the lady with a coffin and the lady with a dying aunt—

> "I suppose you'll be met by a hearse and Patty will be met by an ambulance, and—and I'll be met by Jake." For a moment, she sat behind a cloud of cigarette smoke. There was a puzzled expression in her eyes, and she was laughing quietly at what she had said.

This is the Thornton norm: puerile irony, self-pity floating out into the story, absurdly overloaded understatement; none of which, one hopes, has any necessary connection with the South.

Mr. Foote takes more chances, and he takes bigger falls too. His last story is a *tour de force*—"told in the form of a Spanish legal document"—that merely makes very dull reading; his first is a very silly anecdote about a love-starved lunatic who bumps up against this hostile world of ours—

> When she returned from the coffee urn and set the thick white cup and saucer on the counter, he was waiting. He leaned forward and asked her, stiff-lipped with the steam from coffee rising about his face: "Why doesn't everybody love each other?"

and who avenges himself, after the waitress has been unfriendly and a little girl in the park has been called away from him, by shooting up the restaurant and its proprietor—

> He took careful aim and shot him in the head. As the Greek went down he pushed with both hands, closing the cash drawer.

There is also the story of a Negro cornetist ("Ride Out"), which—though it has impressive passages, especially about Duff's youth and his first encounters with music—is on the whole disappointing,

in its failure to do more at length than to assert the obsession it aims at representing, and in its most embarrassing failure, the stereotype of the young white composer whose imagination is freed by Negro jazz.

Mr. Foote's great advantage is that his rhetoric, bad or good, is his own; and it is often very good, as at the climax of the longest story of the collection, "Child by Fever," when Hector follows the last failing emanation of the ghost of his wife:

> Hector had no will now; he only followed the glimmer, moving like a man in a dream while it led him to the proper rafter, one with a chair at hand. He climbed up, balancing carefully because the chair was frail, put the rope over the rafter, knotted the dangling ends together, then knotted them again, less than a foot above, and with the abrupt deliberation of a housewife threading a needle, put his head through the double strand between the knots. It was a close fit, and he had trouble getting the bottom knot past his chin. Looking down and sideways, with his neck in the silken yoke, he saw that the glimmer was almost gone. Her year was almost up, to the hour; she was only a pale line of light, but the vibration was sharp and steady with approval.
>
> He did not hesitate, for he was quite sure of himself. But the moment he let down, feeling the chair tip backward from his kick, something happened that caused him to change his mind. The vibration switched to a new key; it was more like laughter now—the same mocking laughter he had heard almost a year ago, pitched on a rising note. 'This is wrong,' he tried to say, but the words would not come past the broken voicebox. Then he stopped hearing the laughter. He was alone for an instant of cold and terrible breakage, the grinding thorax and the pounding blood.

Jordan County is one of those collections whose total effect considerably overshadows the effect of any single piece in it. "Child by Fever" keeps building toward, and at time superbly achieves, the atmosphere of inherited guilt and doom which we are told is so peculiarly Southern; but it remains an unresolved story, excellent in detail, rather aimless and despondent in its movement, as if the author—and by contagion, the reader—can never quite believe that the characters are representative and personal enough to bear the weight of their fable of blood. Mr. Foote does have one sustained success, "Pillar of Fire,":it starts weakly, with a Union

colonel who is too neatly a Confederate cartoon; but, once it moves on to its account of Isaac Jameson, it is the only story in either book that gives a convincing impression of what the old way of life may have been like, of the dignity and rootedness that took three generations in the life of one man to grow and mature, and that could be burned down like an old tree as a necessity of war:

> Isaac saw that the officer was a young man—rather hard-looking, however, as if the face had been baked in the same crucible that hardened and glazed the face of his son Clive—and he thought: It's something the war does to them; North and South, they get this way after a time because nowadays the wars go on too long.

The strength of Isaac Jameson's life, eighty-seven years of pioneering and settlement, is behind the perception; and when he dies he leaves behind him on both sides only the hard-faced young men. The power, sporadic as it is, of Mr. Foote's book is in a language which, like the old man, insists on seeing, not a comfortable legend, but what is before the yes, what—in Mr. Taylor's book—is dishearteningly obscured by his effete crocodile tears.

MARVIN MUDRICK

THE ARCHITECTURE OF HUMANISM. By *Geoffrey Scott*. Anchor Press. 1954.

The battlefield of contemporary architectural theory is a dark and bloody ground. One school looks to functionalism and symmetry for salvation, another to unit design and asymmetry. One group advocates interiors that are hospital-white and modern; another, cozy, colorful, and antique. Neither the regional nor the international school of architects will give ground. As the 1050's building boom grows, pencils and pens keep pace with the saws and hammers.

Most Americans, meanwhile, subsist on architectural habits, scraps of tradition, and unexamined prejudices. Our views on building we state not as mere opinion, but dogma. If we are cornered, we always have a lethal dagger up our sleeves:*de gustibus non disputandum est*.

This, says Geoffrey Scott, will never do. In protest he has writ- a book which attempts "to trace the natural history of our opinions, to discover how far upon their own premises they are true or false, and to explain why, when false, they have yet remained plausible, powerful, and convincing."

If *The Architecture of Humanism* does not do all this, it nevertheless is a provocative book which sets forth with admirable clarity a humanistic credo for architecture. Like the Renaissance architects whom he so admires, Mr. Scott believes the imagination comes first, and can always find materials for its expression. He is on the side of man: of a humanism which is men's efforts to think, feel and act for themselves, and to abide by the logic of results. An age which believes this fervently will build and live geratly.

Standing in the way of a humanistic architecture are four great fallacies. Most of this book is an attempt to destroy and undermine them.

At the heart of the romantic fallacy is the tendency to revere the symbolic value of architecture, instead of recognizing style in general for its own sake. Nineteenth century Romantics developed a creed of nature which denied order and proportion, and an obsession with fidelity to the natural fact. The result, for the western world, was the suicide of taste. "Taken in isolation, made hostile to the formal instincts of the mind, nature led to chaos; whence issued a monstrous architecture:*informe ingens, cui lumen adeptum.*"

Not sentiment, but calculation, presents the second grave danger, in the form of the mechanical fallacy. Because of it, constructive science, so long architecture's slave, became the mistress. The mechanical school fails to distinguish between fact and appearance, between feeling and knowing. It neglects alike the aesthetic and moral conscience, and in its zeal for structure loses its vision. It looks in poetry for the syntax of a naked prose.

The romantic fallacy paved the way for, and the mechanical fallacy provoked, the ethical fallacy. Starting with the admirable aim of asserting the human reference of art against the empty cult of abstract technique, it soon overstepped its domain. The moralists raised a prejudice and destroyed a taste without cause, logic,

or advantage. Such qualities as line, space, and shadow are not easily disposed of by the self-righteous scrutiny of an ethical conscience. "To imagine that because the 'conscience' can enrich those values it has, on that account, the slightest power to see them, is the ethical fallacy of taste."

Reveling in the boom of his own canons, Mr. Scott turns next on the evolutionary critics who promulgate the biological fallacy. Their strength lies in this truism—the nature of things is latent in their past. Unfortunately, not always in architecture, however, which can, and sometimes has, scorned heredity; changed its course in mid-career; and gone hither and thither at the bid of individual wills. Architectural history is no precession of ordered causes, but a pageant of adventures, a fantastic masque of tastes.

Having disposed of these secondary and encircling interests, Mr. Scott calls us back to the true problem of taste: studying the methods of appeal which mass, space, line and coherence make, and the modes of our response to them. At the same time, he is calling us back to the naive, the anthropomorphic way which humanizes the world, and is still the aesthetic way; still the basis of poetry and the foundation of architecture. The tendency to transcribe architecture in terms of ourselves always has been, and always must be, the *èlan* of creative design. As Vasari put it, a great building "is not built, but born." To communicate the vital values of the spirit, architecture must appear organic like the body. What is simultaneously seen must be simultaneously understood. Coherence is the basis of style. Humanized mass, space, and line are the components of beauty.

The reader is surprised to discover that *The Architecture of Humanism* was first published over four decades ago, and has not been available since the small second printing in 1924. For these words are not dated. Indeed, they sound as if they might issue from one of our most vigorous current critics. They might have been written, for example, by such a man as Richard Neutra, who says in an important new study *(Survival Through Design):* "An insight into the oneness of the human species and its world-wide problems must guide the designer of our times into a feasible future." Or Walter Gropius, influential leader and teacher at

the Harvard School of Architecture: "The ideal architect needs first of all, high human qualities. He must be the coördinating organizer who welds all biological, social, formal, and technical problems."

The reason Mr. Scott's book does not seem dated, and will always speak to those who read it, is that his study is motivated by a passionate interest in human beings and human values. We do not have to agree with his conclusions to admire his passion.

MARSHALL W. FISHWICK

LUCKY JIM. By *Kingsley Amis*. Doubleday. 1954.

This first novel of Mr. Kingsley Amis, an amiable but pointed satire on academic life somewhat reminiscent of the early Evelyn Waugh, comes as something of a relief after a depressingly serious season in which our fictionists have felt compelled to occupy themselves with such pressing matters as the durability of mankind—a probability Mr. Amis seems able to assume without having to prove it to his readers. It is true that Mr. Jarrell has written an extremely funny book, but one feels that he is a sly fellow not to be trusted: so much wit seldom exists pure, with no moralist's urge laboring somewhere in the immediate background. This is not to say, however, that *Lucky Jim* does not have its own stringent message: "Nice things are nicer than nasty things," a verity as old as any other. It is probable that soon Mr. Amis will feel impelled to write a "serious" novel; but one hopes it will not be quite yet.

It seems best to state at once that Mr. Amis has undertaken to write a work of fiction which is exactly that and nothing else; his book even has a plot. *Lucky Jim* is the history (one year of it, anyway) of James Dixon, hapless instructor of medieval history in a provincial English college. He is beset by a variety of not altogether uncommon troubles, ranging from a plain lady professor with ambiguous designs on him to the distasteful necessity of buttering-up his department head, Professor Welch, an absent-minded bore whose chief interest lies in his artistic—mostly musical—weekends, and who may or may not fire Dixon at the session's

end. There are minor problems as well; Dixon is conniving, for instance, to entice the three prettiest co-eds into his seminar next year while discouraging a determined young man actually interested in the subject—this last a source of real danger because he knows more about it than Dixon.

Under pressure of economic necessity, Dixon accepts—against his judgement—an invitation to one of Welch's weekends. At the professor's house he encounters a number of peculiar people, including Mrs. Welch (a dragon, of course) and their bearded son Bertrand, an artist-type fellow whose pretentious existence Dixon considers an assualt on his sensibility. There is also a blonde named Christine, who is possibly Bertrand's mistress but who is, in any case, a further and more attractive complication for Dixon. During the horrors of Professor Welch's musical evening, he determines on a campaign with two inter-related objectives: (1) to subvert all the Welches, especially the painting member; (2) to secure Christine for himself with the utmost available dispatch. The matter is nearly concluded when Dixon later delivers, at Welch's request, the annual departmental public lecture. Earlier encouraged by a combination of sherry and whiskey, Dixon begins by aping Welch's own lecture manner and concludes by passing out on the platform. Clearly things cannot get much worse; and immediately they do improve.

It should be clear enough that *Lucky Jim* might easily have been a graceless performance, stereotyped and forced. What saves it—an unfortunate phrase, since this book was never in danger—is, first, Mr. Amis' deft writing; his is a cool and urbane prose, strong in sensory rendering but never overcome by it.

The second factor is Mr. Amis' evident gift for characterization, whether he is potting a sitting duck like Professor Welch or rendering an appealing and individual personality, such as Christine turns out to be. His real achievement is Dixon, however, the kind of person we could not credit at all were it not that Amis' skill reminds us that we know at least one like him. Dixon's job is in danger, for example, because a rock he skipped from simple delight happened to bounce off the shin of a math professor. Setting fire with a cigarette to his sheets at the Welch's is a typical contre-

temps; and, typically, he tries to repair the damage by slicing the injured portions away with a razor—something that we ourselves would not be beyond considering in a similar situation—and *might* even do, if only we were sleepy and desperate enough. A keen fictional tact is required to bring off this sort of thing without making your protagonist a fool, which Dixon never is. He even has a set of spiritual strategies (including a new Face for every situation) against obviously malignant circumstances. He is, in short, the familiar figure (like the comedian of the silent movie) who balances always on the edge of disaster without thought of surrender—or falling in. We owe it to Amis' talent as a writer of fiction that he remains a highly individualized person.

Daniel Chaucer

The Pound Newsletter. Edited by *John Edwards*. Issued from the University of California.

This little mimeographed bulletin, now in its third number, performs the useful service of bringing together notes and bibliographical data pertinent to its subject; but it seems a sad irony that Pound (who as early as 1917 commented wryly on his admirers "ever nobly desirous of erecting me into a sort of national institution") should of all people be subjected to this kind of academic entombment (I come to bury Ezra, not to praise him). The appearance of Pound's translations of the Confucian Odes is felicitously timed to remind us that, despite Mr. Edwards' laudable energy, Pound is after all a live man, and a poet.

T. H. C.

NOTE FROM ABROAD

LONDON

The attempt to convey an impression of the literary and artistic scene in London during the last six months is, in this case, hobbled by inhibition and a little embarrassment. Disclaiming chauvinism, I cling fast to the assumption that, at this sickeningly lurching moment in the history of the "West," there must be a limit to the flailing of one's country's exhasted, etiolated efforts to preserve some fragments of European civilisation—particularly when addressing another country. The time is now past when wholesale critical destruction of the kind inaugurated by "Blast" in 1914 is needed or possible: that onslaught ripped open a great deal of frowsy clothing, both mental and physical, but it coincided with (or fractionally anticipated) the collapse of so much irreplaceable masonry that the after effects were not so lasting or healthful as they otherwise might have been. Wyndham Lewis himself emerged from that first war to find a hastily patched Edwardianism, albeit of osseous and unresonant material, sheltering "Bloomsberries," Huxley's Mr. Merceptan and his own three inimitable Apes. Summoning up a quite inhuman energy he detonated sufficiently to demolish more than mere shells: his appetite necessarily unappeased, Lewis swooped on sterner vessels, and one by one the literary giants were rocked and riven. This writer remembers the shock engendered by a first reading of "Men without Art." It was one thing for Virginia Woolf or Hemingway to be swept under, but when Eliot, Pound and James Joyce, hollow men all, were drowned in the Lewis storm the poor student felt his mind to be tottering. He had thought these men good! And here was Thor himself to show what a fool he had been. For twenty years Lewis loosed his merry and tremendous thunder until, early in the nineteen forties, he lost his centre of gravity: Europe, the preservation of which he desperately desired, was about to lose its entity and collapse. With that castrophe in sight, the fire of Lewis's satirical impulse died, and he was never to be quite the same man again.

The great strength of Lewis as a critic was that he always foresaw the disaster. Whereas for his (largely left-wing) opponents the future of Europe depended on which political ideology prevailed, Lewis saw that the *real* problem was ignored or misconceived: If people believed that the problem could be solved by ideological grappling, Europe as we knew it would collapse. And that is precisely what happened. The great collectivisation, the hegemony of *homo stultus* is upon us, and it is unlikely that the individual European will survive. He must come to terms with the two great mass cultures.[1]

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[1]This paragraph must not be interpreted as Americano or Russo-phobia. I merely wish to emphasize that the destruction of Europe (and it remains to be seen whether that destruction will finally be completed) means the disappearance of that cultural source on which both America and Russia have hitherto depended. They are the losers as much as we.

Criticism should have two main functions: *a.* the concentration on that which is good; *b.* the destruction of that which is bad. If "b" is to be useful it must coexist with (a) which in turn implies a fairly flourishing era. This criticism is not necessarily "writing about" but may be contained in works of art; e.g. The Divina Commedia and The Cantos. If conditions are not favorable for the coexistence of (a) and (b) criticism will be increasingly directed towards the mediocre and the bad. Concentration on the bad (with little or no good to balance it) being depressing and ultimately useless, criticism inevitably tends to elevate the value of the mediocre. This ends in the falsification of all standards and the critic, by which we mean the man who earns his living entirely by writing about works of art, comes into his own—and in such numbers! This is the era in which we live: it fosters such criticism as the following sentence from the anonymous review of Eliot's "Confidential Clerk" which appeared in "The Times Literary Supplement:"

Yet it were unreasonable to hold that in declining to move on untimely to a further stage of experimentation he had disappointed.

That is T. L. S. pseudo-Addisonese at its very worst: but it exemplifies an attitude which that journal encourages: it rests on the absurd pretence that a formal eighteenth century manner can still be appropriate. The Supplement abounds in such modish phrases as "climate of opinion," the "crisis of our time," "this period of consolidation," yet knows that you agree to pretend that the houses in Bedford Square have not been divided into flats and offices!

Literary parasitism has probably never been so densely concentrated as it is today. Literary America, caught in the tentacles of a particularly insidious academicism, has a long struggle ahead, if we are to believe Miss Mary MacCarthy's "Revolt of the Critics" (a talk recently given on the Third Programme). To English eyes the plummy humourlessness of such critical titles as "Eliot and the Sense of the Occult" or "Faulkner as Elegist" does still seem a little ridiculous—but less so with every year. Critical activity is now so to the fore that it appears to be forgotten how easy it is to be a critic, even quite a good critic. We know that the costive manipulators of those pert, confident remarks about other men's work would be ashamed to reveal their own creations. And one wonders whether it ought not to be made a *sine qua non* of the appearance of a critical opus that it would be accompanied by a creative work (however incompetent). That would be one step towards the re-establishment of standards.

* * * * *

The two most important artistic events which have taken place in London this year have been the appearance of Martha Graham and her company of dancers, and the radio production of Ezra Pound's version of Sophocles' Trachiniae. Miss Graham was coldly received at first and, after three weeks, ended with thirty fanatical admirers. Her achievement seems to me threefold: she has surpassed Laban and Jooss in the evolution of a dance technique adequate to contemporary expression; she has virtually re-created the male role in western dancing, thus enabling men to perform without becoming hermaphroditic; and, above all, Martha Graham's dance dramas (or whatever one should call them) are the only instance I know of a complete modern *art* of the *theatre*. Her art is the living proof that the basis of all drama

is *action* and, by inference, that spoken language (in the theatre) is truly appropriate only when it grows out of or clarifies action. This point was resoundingly made in her beautiful evocation of Emily Dicknson, "Letter to the World," in which, at certain key moments, one of the dancers spoke lines from Emily Dickinson's poems. I would not believe that the experiment could escape preciosity and artiness—until I saw the performance. Then it was blindingly clear that this was what the drama ought to be, and always has been in its great periods: there are times when the action must be danced, others when it is right to speak, still others when the action should be sung. Spoken language (Mr. Eliot's "dramatic diction") considered apart can never produce a renaissance of the drama. As one intelligent man remarked to me, if there is ever to be a new spoken lyric drama the lessons of Martha Graham's dances will first have to be worked through. The present writers of verse drama are clearly on the wrong track. The problem is not one of refinement of language or of forging a poetic diction encompassing colloquial speech: it is not a *literary* matter at all. This misdirection explains the painful lack of kinesis, the slowness, of Mr. Eliot's dramas. Too often the language is deploying no action, but talking *about* action. "The Confidential Clerk" should have been written as a novel.

The drama has never been one of Ezra Pound's major interests. It is therefore quite extraordinary that in his translation of "Trachiniae" he has given us English verse which not only can be spoken and sung but *acted*. And this is the first Greek drama into English which that can be said. Granted that Pound has for inspiration perhaps the greatest dramatist of all: The fact remains that no other English versions (of any of the Greek dramas) measure up to the originals either in poetic felicity or in their sheer dynamism as *play*. Pound has brought off both achievements: he has written magnificent choruses which can be sung: for example, this strophe from the sixth chorus:

"THAT WIND might bear away my grief and me,
Sprung from the hearth-stone, let it bear me away.
God's Son is dead,
        that was so brave and strong,
And I am craven to behold such death
        Swift on the eye,
Pain hard to uproot,
        and this so vast
A splendour of ruin."

And he has contrived splendidly actable dialogue, e.g. these lines of Deianeira's:

"But I can't stay mad at him long,
    I know what's got into him,
And yet . . .
    the two of us,
My husband, her man, the new girl's man,
    and she's young.
And:
    'E'en from fond eyes, olde flowers are cast away.'
And

it's not nice for a woman to be too crochety,
the ones with nice minds are not peevish.
And
may be there's a way out."

Time and again, cadence and hiatus indicate the "tone" and stress for the actor. Even those among the audience who knew Greek agreed that the impact of this version as *play* was astonishing. Because Pound has riveted his attention on Sophocles as playwright he has left all other translators (and, incidentally, all the present poetic dramatists) standing. I wish I had space to quote the final speech beginning "Hoist him up, fellows/And for me a great tolerance,/matching the gods' great unreason"/ That speech (and there are others equally well done in the play) is language of such ingenious intonation, pathos and allusive beauty as has not been heard in the English drama for over three hundred years.

DENNIS GOACHER

CONTRIBUTORS

RYUNOSUKE AKUTAGAWA, the eminent Japanese writer who commited suicide in 1947, is the author of *Rashomon.*

RICHARD THORMAN, who has appeared in *Shenandoah* before, lives at present in Europe.

ASHLEY BROWN, who has appeared in *Shenandoah* before, lives in Tennessee at present.

DAVID GORDON makes his first appearance in *Shenandoah* with his translation from the Chinese.

THOMAS COLE, who lives in Baltimore, edits *Imagi.* He has appeared in *Shenandoah* before.

JOHN REID, a Canadian resident, has written a novel about Desmond Slake.

HUGH KENNER'S forthcoming book, *Doublin's Joyce,* an extract from which appeared in *Shenandoah,* Vol. IV, No. 1, is announced in Chatto and Windus's current list. His book on Wyndham Lewis will be reviewed in a later issue of *Shenandoah.*

ALAN NEAME lives currently in Baghdad. His poem, *The Sack of New Sarum,* which first appeared in *Shenandoah,* has been widely acclaimed.

EVA HESSE, who has appeared in *Shenandoah* before, lives currently in Germany.

KIMON FRIAR writes from Antibes that he is nearing completion of his collaboration with Nikos Kazantzakis in translating the latter's *Odyssey,* a sequel to Homer, into English. He has recently received a Fulbright Grant in modern Greek literature to study in Greece.

AUDREY McGAFFIN has published in *Talisman, Imagi,* and *New Poems by American Poets,* the Ballentine anthology. More of her poetry will appear in *Voices.*

MARVIN SOLOMON publishes often in the little magazines. He lives in Baltimore.

DONALD DAVIE, poet and critic, is a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. Verse by him will appear in the next issue.

JAMES G. LEYBURN, sociologist and classicist, has recently returned to the U.S.A. from Bermuda.

MARVIN MUDRICK'S *The Professor and the Poet,* which appeared in *Shenandoah,* will be reprinted in Europe by *Platform.*

MARSHALL W. FISHWICK, professor of American Studies at Washington and Lee, has recently published *American Heroes: Myth and Reality* (Public Affairs Press). He is currently at work on a novel.

DANIEL CHAUCER, a one-time colleague of Ford Maddox Ford, resumes his literary career in this issue of *Shenandoah*.

THOMAS H. CARTER now teaches English in a Virginia School. He has recently avoided the draft.

DENIS GOACHER has returned to England after a short visit to the United States.

ADDENDA

Among the literary things drawn to our attention: Anchor Books' issuance of several marvelous reprints, among them Kitto's masterly *Greek Tragedy*, Berenson's *Aesthetics and History*, and Leavis' discriminating study of novelists Eliot, James, and Conrad, *The Great Tradition*. Other books are by Henry James, D. H. Lawrence, and Edmund Wilson .... Brigant Press' publication of the *Selected Poems* of William Hull, 1942-1952. In spite of difficulties with dislocated syntax and a tendency toward vociferousness, this poetry shows moments of great power; e. g., "*Tactical Aeronautics*," "*To Men's Wear Dept.*" .... New Directions' publication of the Tennessee Williams collection of short stories, *Hard Candy*, in a limited edition was unfortunate. The stories are always clumsy, often maudlin, and lend an impression of a shrill note held too long .... The lively London-published "Journal of Opposition," *The European*, a review of the arts, politics, and the cultural state. Never dull, it views politics from a moderately liberal standpoint and keeps criticism within the bounds of good taste. Desmond Stewart and Alan Neame are two of its literary stars .... Ellen Glasgow's posthumous autobiography, *The Woman Within*, is in the best (or worst) Byronic mode: confessional, tearful, disillusioned—a literary rags-to-riches story. Here are sad violinists, love at first sight, and the rest of the stagy paraphernalia. She might have profited by the advice of Collier of MacMillan: "... stop writing and go back to the South and have some babies." It is published by Harcourt Brace .... Henry Holt's publication of a first novel, *Storm Fear*, by a young New Orleanian, Clinton Seeley. It is a raw, tense story of the impingement of a brutal world on a young boy. A work of artistic integrity, it would bear favorable comparison to a recent book on a similar theme, Davis Grubb's *The Night of the Hunter* .... The *London Times* supplement, "American Writing Today," is something of a monument (at only $.50 per copy). It is thorough and clearheaded in spite of several hasty generalizations as to trends, styles, etc., that seem to be not so clear cut as our friends across the sea would have them, perhaps for ease in categorizing and anthologizing. A splendid collection of essays, most of which are irritatingly anonymous, as is customary with the *Times* ....

Our deepest appreciation goes to the Board of Trustees at Washington and Lee, whose vision and generosity have enabled this review to continue.

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